

ABSTRACT

Toward a New Church in a New Africa: A Biographical Study of Bishop Ralph Edward Dodge 1907 – 2008

This biography of a Methodist Bishop, Ralph Edward Dodge is an extensive look into how, as a missionary, mission board executive, and bishop, Dodge applied principles of indigenization he embraced as a young man preparing for missionary work to the complexities of ministry in Southern Africa when empires were withdrawing and new nations were forming. Written by an African, the dissertation examines Dodge's impact upon the several countries in which he was involved as a churchman – countries that would soon move from imperial subjugation to independence.

Ralph Edward Dodge (1907–2008) was an American missionary and Bishop of the Methodist Church and United Methodist Church. He was born in Iowa and went to Africa in 1936 at age 29. He began his missionary career in the Portuguese colony of Angola. Except for four years during World War II, he would serve there until 1950. During the war, he continued his postgraduate work, obtaining two more degrees, including a PhD. Afterwards, Dodge and his family returned to Africa. In 1950, he was asked to serve as Executive Secretary for Africa and Europe at the Methodist Church's Board of Missions in New York. Six years later, the Reverend Doctor Dodge would return to Africa as Bishop Dodge, the first Methodist Bishop elected by the Africa Central Conference, and the only American. His Episcopal Area included the colonial territories of Angola, Mozambique, and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). When his twelve-year term was ended, he was elected "Bishop for Life."

Bishop Dodge remained in Africa until his “retirement” in 1968. During those years, he led the church in Southern Africa through a time of seismic political and national shifts, helping it change from a missionary-led church to an indigenously-led church.

This dissertation shows how Dodge’s deeply-held missionary principle concerning the primacy of partnerships between missionaries and indigenous Christians made for more effective evangelism and greater trust, but that his primary motive the gospel itself had its call for mutual sharing and identification among kingdom citizens. During the years of tumult, the principle held through troubled and difficult waters in a time when race relationships in Southern Africa between whites and blacks were disintegrating because of segregation, oppression, and mistrust. In the face of these complex challenges to the society and the church, Dodge’s response was prophetic while remaining evangelistic. Convinced that race discrimination and injustice were not just wrong but a hindrance to attracting people to the gospel, Dodge wrote and spoke courageously against colonial practices that reduced Africans to second class citizenship. As a result, he earned an unusual degree of support and respect from Africans who saw in him a man who lived the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Moreover, under his leadership, African churches and their leaders increasingly became bolder advocates of radical social change.

However, Dodge’s positions also aroused controversy and the antipathy of the Portuguese and British colonial governments who saw him as a national threat. Fearing his influence, the Portuguese revoked his residency and visiting permits in Angola and Mozambique in 1961 and 1962 respectively. In 1964, the Rhodesian government expelled him too. This dissertation considers in detail all these events.

Dodge's higher education initiative is shown to be of special note. Through it, indigenous leaders for the church—much needed after the transition from colonialism—were trained. Moreover, hundreds of young men and women would go on to higher education and training in Brazil, Europe, India and the United States. The program also produced political leaders in several independence movements, who played key roles in challenging European colonial rule.

This dissertation relies on the papers of Ralph Dodge at Syracuse University, missionary documents at the United Methodist archives at Madison, New Jersey, Drew University, and extensive interviews. It adds many new details, corrections, and insights to previous accounts of Dodge's life, including Dodge's autobiography. Scholarly biographies of missionaries by writers indigenous to the lands in which those missionaries served are few. This dissertation by a Zimbabwean adds to that small corpus.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET

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written by

Samuel Dzobo

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has been read and approved by the undersigned members of

the Faculty of

Asbury Theological Seminary

Dr. Arthur G. McPhee, Mentor

Dr. Stephen Offutt, Reader

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DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:
DR. ARTHUR G. MCPHEE, MENTOR
DR. STEPHEN OFFUTT, READER

BY
SAMUEL DZOBO

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of pictures	iv
List of maps	iv
Abbreviations	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Preface	ix
Introduction	xii

CHAPTER

1. Early Years: Born and raised in Iowa

Ralph Dodge's childhood and education.....	1
Ralph Dodge's conversion and call to ministry.....	8
The Love Story: Ralph Dodge's engagement to Eunice Elvira Davis...	18
Boston University: Student pastorate and marriage	22
Ministry in North Dakota.....	26
Missionaries to Africa: Ordination and commission	29
Orientation at Hartford and birth of child	34

2. Missionaries in Angola 1936 – 1941

Ministry in Luanda	42
Portuguese policy of assimilation.....	48
Ralph Dodge as District Superintendent.....	51
Family life in Angola.....	63
Assignment to Quessua and first furlough.....	66

3. Ralph Dodge as Foreign Division Secretary and bishop

World War II and back to school.....	75
In the footsteps of Bishop William Taylor.....	78
Partnership and collaboration in missions.....	82

Dodge and the Social Gospel	84
Western civilization versus the Gospel.....	89
Early African resistance to Portuguese labor laws.....	92
Back to Angola.....	93
Eunice's illness and birth of Peggy.....	99
Close call with malaria.....	100
Peggy's baptism.....	106
Africa central Conference in Zimbabwe.....	108
A new Methodist mission center among the Dembos.....	113
Foreign Division Secretary for Africa.....	122
Reverse culture shock again.....	126
Life as Foreign Division Secretary.....	130

4. Life of a Bishop in Africa

First election and consecration of a Methodist bishop in Africa.....	140
Brief history of Old Mutare.....	150
African nationalism in Zimbabwe.....	157
Brief history of colonization of Zimbabwe.....	162
Brief history of missions in Zimbabwe and comity agreements.....	167
Efforts to make the Methodist Church an indigenous church.....	171
The revival of 1918 at Old Mutare.....	175
The Methodist Church in Mozambique.....	178
Tribal issues in the Angola Annual Conference.....	180
Bishop Dodge's higher education initiative.....	187
Leadership development program for Africa.....	199

5. God is in Control (1961 – 1964)

The beginning of war of liberation in Angola.....	210
The Safari to Learning and push for transfer of responsibility.....	220
Bishop Dodge at the State Department in Washington, DC.....	234
Bishop Dodge's call for a new church in a new Africa.....	243
Bishop Dodge's deportation and the Methodist Church's response.....	256
Bishop Dodge in exile.....	270

6.	Leading the Methodist Church in Exile (1965 – 1968)	
	Bishop Dodge in exile: The challenges	278
	UDI and Dodge’s call to evacuate missionaries.....	287
	The long separation.....	293
	Bishop Dodge’s position on social issues.....	299
	Bishop Dodge’s evaluation his own work.....	308
	Argument about Gospel and politics.....	312
	Bishop Dodge’s work in retirement.	316
	Bishop Dodge’s return to Africa.....	323
	Mrs. Eunice Dodge’s death.....	325
	Bishop Dodge’s illness and death.....	327
	“My cup overflows”.....	330
7.	Summary	
	African nationalism as opportunity for the church.....	334
	Indigenize the church.....	337
	Train future leaders.....	339
	Joining Evangelical views with Social Gospel.....	341
	Future of the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.....	343
	Bibliography.....	345
	Appendices.....	354

List of Photographs

Ralph and Eunice Dodge wedding pictures.....	25
The 1936 family passport photo.....	37
The 1938 family portrait in Luanda, Angola.....	66
The 1947 family passport photo.....	108
The 1955 family portrait in Ridgewood, NJ.....	134
1894 Old Umtali Picture.....	151
Bishop Dodge's picture (1957).....	156
Bishop Dodge at Harare Methodist Church (1958).....	186
Bishops Dodge, Booth and Raines with Peggy (1960).....	206
The Dodge family picture in Harare.....	229
<i>The Rhodesian Herald</i> newsstand announcing Dodge's deportation.....	258
"Propagandist in clerical garb".....	303
Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge at Mindolo (1970).....	320
Bishop Dodge and his siblings, Sophia and Orville.....	322
Bishop Dodge's 100 th birthday picture with his children (2007).....	327
Bishop Dodge's 2008 picture.....	329

A Map

1948 Map of Africa showing location of Methodist centers.....	112
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Abbreviations

AIC	African Initiated/Independent Churches
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
ANC	African National Congress (Zimbabwe)
BOFAC	Board of Finance and Coordination
BSAC	British South Africa Company
FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front (Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique)
LMS	London Missionary Society
MPLA	People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NDP	National Democratic Party
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UMC	United Methodist Church
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

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PREFACE

I am a pastor in the United Methodist Church. I grew up in a very large family—a polygamous family—in a village outside Mutare, Zimbabwe. As a boy, my father attended a Methodist primary school in his village of Chitora where he was taught Methodist hymns by missionaries. He never joined the Methodist Church but could sing many of the Methodist hymns from heart. Later, when he married, my father joined an African Initiated Church (IAC), the Apostles of Johanne Maranke. When I was born, my father had left the Apostles of Johanne Maranke.

One Sunday morning, in August of 1987, at the age of twelve, I was passing through the school grounds of my primary school when I heard some people singing in a classroom. Out of curiosity, I walked over to the classroom to see the people who were singing. I stood by the window watching and then decided to walk to the door of the classroom to have a better view of the people in the classroom. The moment I got to the door, I was invited in and walked into an amazing Christian welcome. The faces were all familiar because everyone lived in the village. It was a local United Methodist congregation meeting for worship in the classroom.

From that day, my faith journey as a disciple of Jesus Christ began: a journey that brought me to answer God's call to be a preacher and one that has led me to write this dissertation. Little did I know that the Methodist songs which I heard my father sing as we worked in the fields were components of God's grace and would lead me to experience God's abundant love in the United Methodist Church. Again, likewise, on that

Sunday morning when Jesus called me through singing at Dzobo Primary School, I had no idea that in June 1964, Bishop Ralph Dodge had brought together youths from surrounding Methodist congregations to sing, for the first time, Methodist hymns accompanied by drums (*ngoma*) and rattles (*hosho*). That was the only time that Bishop Dodge is reported to have ever visited my village.

When I came to E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary in 2009, I planned to study and explore the role of the church in addressing political violence as has been experienced in Zimbabwe since 2000. Early on, I enrolled in an evangelization seminar on Mission Biography where I crafted a research paper on Bishop Dodge. For my research I read Dodge's books, *The Unpopular Missionary* (1964), and *The Pagan Church: The Protestant Failure in America* (1968). The first one revealed a man with a prophetic vision and voice at a time when the church in southern Africa, led by missionaries, seemed to be caught unawares by the violence that came with the quest for independence. It led to a shift of interest that has resulted in this biographical dissertation.

In this biography, I have kept prominent the important historical context and transitional period in which he lived and worked during his many years in Africa. I have been especially interested in showing how those factors led to his so-called "radical"—certainly provocative views and missiological innovations.

The corpus of literature by Africans writing about missionaries who worked in their native countries is small but growing. I am glad for the opportunity to add to it. I decided to write about Bishop Dodge partly because I was fascinated by the many stories

I heard about him from ordinary people in Zimbabwe, and especially the ones at Hilltop United Methodist Church where I pastored for nearly eight years. They were consistently affirming. Their memories, leading to this scholarly study from an African perspective, I submit, should be a valuable and important addition to our assessment of Bishop Ralph Dodge and his lasting contribution to missiology and the church of his adopted African home.

– Samuel Dzobo

INTRODUCTION

Ralph Edward Dodge (1907–2008) was a Methodist missionary, mission board executive secretary, and bishop in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), hardly the life one would foresee for a farm boy in northwest Iowa. However, with a little money and well-timed help from others, he managed to work his way through college and graduate school, eventually earning five degrees: from Taylor University, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree; from Boston University he got both a Bachelor of Sacred Theology and Master of Arts degrees and from Hartford Foundation Seminary, Ralph Dodge graduated with a Master of Sacred Theology degree and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Anthropology.

In his era, Dodge was a notable figure in missions, especially in Southern Africa. But for all his accomplishments in the Methodist Church and Africa, today he is little-known by missiological scholars. Even his considerable body of published work, once conspicuous because of his straightforward criticisms of colonial era missionary conventions and praxes, has now faded from memory.

Few people have been involved in the range of mission roles Ralph Dodge worked at during his lifetime. From 1936–1950, he was a missionary in Angola. Thus, he had firsthand extensive opportunities to see how missions and missionaries operated at the local, grassroots level. After 14 years of serving as a missionary, Dodge served for six years (1950–1956) in New York as an executive secretary of the Foreign Division of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, supervising the work of over 400 missionaries in Africa and Europe. In that role, Dodge was also a policy maker. But,

perhaps most importantly, he got the opportunity to see the work of the Methodist Church from a global perspective. Then, in October 1956, Dodge became the first bishop of the Methodist Church ever elected in Africa; all bishops prior to 1956 were elected in the United States and assigned to Africa as missionary bishops. At his election, Dodge became the bishop for Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, the highest level of ecclesiastical leadership and authority in both the Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church.

Second, Dodge gave bold leadership during the end of the colonial era in missions when seismic political changes were taking place in Africa. During his time of preparation for the mission field at the Hartford Foundation Seminary in Connecticut, Dodge had been impressed by a mission philosophy that emphasized the training of indigenous people for transfer of responsibilities. When he began his ministry as a missionary in Angola in 1936, the Methodist Church in Southern Africa was predominantly led by missionaries based in mission centers, although Africans did most of the evangelistic work and brought most of the new converts into the church. At the end of the World War II, Dodge found himself caught up in the midst of an emerging African nationalism that was often hostile to the missionary enterprise. With many African countries gaining independence after the World War II, African nationalists most of whom had been educated in mission schools, began to call for missionaries to go back to their home countries because they had come to perceive them as accessories of colonialism.

If missionaries had to go home, what would be the future of the young church that the missionaries had established in Africa? It was in trying to answer this question that

Bishop Dodge demonstrated he was ideally suited for his transitional role. This he did by adopting an agenda that set in motion an effective program of indigenization on the Methodist Church in Southern Africa. The agenda included the following: first, launching a higher education initiative to train Africans to take over leadership not just in the church but in national politics too; second, embracing and incorporating traditional African features and expressions of worship such as drums, rattles (*ngoma nehosho*), music and dances into Christian worship; and, third, forming an ecumenical alliance of churches in Zimbabwe, of which Bishop Dodge was elected the first president. It was then called the Christian Council of Rhodesia; it is now called the Zimbabwe Council of Churches.

Dodge was a strong proponent of personal evangelism. His personal relationship with people earned him great respect among the Africans. It was out of his personal interactions with Africans in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe that he realized racial practices against Africans both inside and outside the church were impeding evangelization. Consequently, Dodge began to speak and write against racial practices. Influenced by Walter Rauschenbusch's writings and the Social Gospel, he pivoted to addressing social issues of social justice, especially unfair labor laws in Angola and racial discrimination practices in Zimbabwe. He fervently believed Africans had the right to fight for equality as long as they chose non-violence means to get their freedoms.

In 1964, Bishop Dodge's first published book, *The Unpopular Missionary* came out. In it, he criticized not only the church but the colonial government in Zimbabwe on racial and land segregation. The book came after the Bishop had been banned from visiting Angola and Mozambique by the Portuguese. In the July, 1964 Dodge was

deported from Zimbabwe by the Rhodesian government. He was, in fact, the first religious leader to be deported by the Rhodesian government. After the expulsions, he lived in Zambia as a bishop in exile.

Another key contribution of Bishop Dodge's service to God and the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe was that he transformed the Methodist Church from being a rurally oriented church to one that included urban work. By allowing Methodist congregations to start in towns and cities throughout out Zimbabwe in spite of comity agreements, he also transformed the Methodists from being a regional presence to a national one.

CHAPTER ONE

EARLY YEARS: BORN AND RAISED IN IOWA

Ralph Dodge's childhood and education

Ralph Edward Dodge was born on the twenty-fifth of January, 1907, in Milford, a small farming town in northwest Iowa. Ralph was the fourth and last child of Ernest Ira and Lizzie Longshore Dodge. Delivered in his parents' bedroom on a very cold night by the local rural doctor with the help of his grandmother, Mrs. Longshore, his birth was complicated and painful for his mother. The delivery nearly killed her and would affect her health for many years. The critical condition of her health caused her to be admitted to the hospital in St. Paul, Minnesota for psychiatric care. Because of Lizzie's extensive medical needs, Mrs. Longshore took her, Ralph and his brother, Orville to Webster, in northwest Wisconsin. The rest of the family later relocated to Webster after Ernest sold his farm in Milford.

Ralph had two sisters, Sophia and Elsie, and a brother named Orville. Later in life, Ralph would recall growing up as a "delicate child"¹ because grandmother Longshore, Sophie, and Elsie cared for him most of the time. Ralph was also born with a hernia, a medical condition that prevented him from hard play and strenuous work. Furthermore, the condition contributed to a bedwetting problem that would affect him throughout his life.

In the summer of 1913, the family moved back to Iowa to settle in Terril, a small town eleven miles southeast of Milford where they had purchased a farm. That fall, Ralph was enrolled in first grade in Terril when he was six years and six months, riding in a

horse drawn bus to and from school. Across the road from the family home lived the Witchens family, with whom they exchanged threshing and from whom they purchased apples. To the north of the farm lived the Heldts family. Mr. Heldts was a tall, pipe smoking man who periodically assisted Ralph's father in painting the farm's buildings. West of the farm lived the Woods family, who specialized in Percheron horses. East of the farm were the Zehnders who raised Black Angus cattle and whose children often played together with Ralph.

Having been reared in a farming community, Ralph was constantly surrounded by simple, yet hardworking people. It was a community where people both knew and turned to one another for support. Families in Terill shared labor, machinery, stories and common values. Ralph remembered that as children growing up in this closely-knit farming community, they "hung May baskets at each other's doors and played hide-and-go-seek together in moonlight."² With other children from the community, Ralph rode the same horse drawn bus to school in the winter, toes tingling from frost.

In the summer of 1916, when Ralph was nine years old, he had surgery in St. Paul to fix the hernia that had prevented him from sharing in the strenuous work that was required of farm life. His parents wisely ensured that he took an appropriate amount of time to rest and recuperate from the surgery. Upon recovery, Ralph could resume a more normal life of hard work as a child on a Midwest farm. He came to greatly appreciate and respect getting his hands dirty in the soil, learning from his father, and waking up early at five o'clock in the morning (except in winter when his father would give them another one and half hours to sleep). Ralph believed his father had distinguished himself as a good and effective farmer through a strong work ethic. He admitted, "Undoubtedly I had

become a workaholic from trying to follow my father and brother in their routine farm activities.”³

As Ralph, his father, and brother were mostly responsible for the outside work on the farm, his mother and sisters worked inside the home, such as preparing good and substantial food for the family. On most mornings, breakfast consisted of eggs, fried potatoes, sausages, bread, milk and fruits. Following breakfast each day was the family devotion time. Afterwards the males would head out to work the farm, and during the school season, Ralph and his siblings would go to school. Later, when Ralph’s sisters, Sophia and Elsie were married he was assigned to help his mother with household chores because Lizzie’s health was everyone’s concern in the family, and there was so much work in the home to be done. Ralph learned to clean the house, do laundry, wash dishes, and to cook. His mother taught him to cook, something he enjoyed doing. Indeed, through work inside and outside the farm, Ralph had acquired skills that would make him an all-round and self-sufficient person. Later in life he would not expect anyone to do for him anything he felt he could for himself.

Early in his life, two books had significant impact on Ralph and how he would relate to people later in his life. The first book was the Bible. One of Ralph’s earliest memories was daily Bible reading with his family. His mother, who had served as a teacher before marrying Ralph’s father, who had only formally completed fifth grade, was primarily responsible for reading to the family. Each morning a chapter from the Bible was read and if the chapter was long, Ralph’s mother would divide it in half. There was time for reflection after which they all knelt at their chairs and either Ralph’s father or mother would offer a prayer. The daily morning devotion with his family was an

important routine and one that was rarely interrupted or changed. It was because of these devotions that Ralph remembered so clearly the Bible stories and their characters.

The second book that had significant meaning in Ralph's childhood was *Black Beauty: The Autobiography of a Horse* by Anne Sewell.⁴ Ralph first read *Black Beauty* at nine years of age. During the summer of 1916 when he was recuperating from surgery to correct the hernia problem and was refrained from manual work, Ralph turned to reading. *Black Beauty's* influence on Ralph in how he related with people and treated animals especially horses cannot be underestimated. Ralph read the book many times well into his adulthood. It was the book even as a missionary he would read when his mind wandered back to his childhood. He loved and treated his horses on the farm very well but beyond treating his horses well, Ralph seemed to have embraced the aspects of showing kindness, perseverance and courage to define him and how he would relate with other people. In his personal copy of *Black Beauty*, there are many sentences he underlined and wrote notes on. The following excerpts are a few examples;

Now I say that with cruelty and oppression it is everybody's business to interfere when they see it.⁵

If a thing is right, it can be done, and if it is wrong it can be done without; and a good man will find a way.⁶

Do you know why this world is as bad as it is? ... It is because people think only about their own business, and won't trouble themselves to stand up for the oppressed, nor bring the wrong doer to light. I never see a wicked thing like this without doing what I can... My doctrine is this, that if we see cruelty or wrong that we have the power to stop, and do nothing, we make ourselves sharers in the guilt.⁷

Ralph's spiritual journey and upbringing was comprised of daily devotions with the family, two Sunday worship services, and Wednesday prayer and Bible study

meetings. Because the Dodges were Methodists, the family attended worship services at Terril Methodist Church. While the Dodge children were taught to work hard and enjoy farming, the parents also strictly raised their children to observe Sunday as the Sabbath, a day of rest from work. “No matter how many neighbors were in their fields harvesting their overripe oats or barley before an impending storm, our horses were never harnessed on Sunday, except the one that drew the surrey to church.”⁸ Attending both morning and evening worship services was a requirement. Nonetheless, Ralph still very much loved to go to church. As a child, he loved his Sunday school classes and as a youth he participated in youth activities. When there was much work to be done on the farm or severe weather conditions, it was only excusable to miss midweek services, which were comprised of Bible study and prayers, and not full worship.

At age twelve, Ralph desperately mumbled his first prayer. He had lost his mother’s pair of scissors while working in the corn field. She had reluctantly given him the pair of scissors in the first place because Ralph had previously lost other items in the field. This time, he promised his mother that he would bring the scissors back. He remembered putting them in his pocket as he used the corn knife to cut stalks of corn, but later when he reached for the pair of scissors to cut some twine to tie stalks of corn together, he could not find them.

He immediately looked around, kicked some dirt and searched among the stalks of corn he had cut down, yet there were no scissors. The thought of breaking his promise scared Ralph. The search became frantic. Then he remembered a lesson about prayer from Sunday school. He knelt on the dirt, closed his eyes and whispered, “God show me where the scissors are.”⁹ He opened his eyes and stood up just as the cloud that was

hiding the sun cleared and from a distance he saw a shining object reflecting the light of the sun. It was his mother's pair of scissors. For Ralph, this experience, he agreed "left a lasting impression although subsequent prayers were seldom as promptly and explicitly answered."¹⁰ It was in this moment that the seed to trust God through a life of prayer was planted.

Ralph's childhood was not without the occasional vacation. Every summer, the family would take time away from the strenuous life of farming to enjoy a break. Ralph enjoyed the vacations especially the fishing trips with his father and brother. Between the time to harvest hay and cut grains, Ernest took his boys to either Arnolds Park or Spirit Lake to fish. For Ralph, the fishing trips were not so much about whether he caught any fish, although he liked catching some, but they were more so an opportunity to enjoy nature and the company of his father away from work on the farm.

In the second semester of high school in 1921, Ralph applied for a job to drive a school bus. Because in his days, school buses were drawn by horses, his father allowed his own horses to draw the community school bus. For his six-mile bus route, Ralph was paid sixty dollars a month. Waking up early for his new job was not a problem because he was used to getting up early to work on the farm. Throughout his four years of high school, Ralph drove the school bus, picking up children from rural homes to school and driving them back to their homes. He opened a savings account with a local bank where he saved most of his earnings.

Between 1921 and 1924 there were significant changes to the Dodge family. Ralph's brother, Orville got married to Zeola on March 9, 1921, one week away from his

seventeenth birthday. Orville and his wife started their own farm. Ralph's father retired from farming and bought a house in town, where Ralph also lived. His father was contracted to deliver milk between Terril and Estherville. Since Ralph had shown interest in farming, his father decided not to sell all his horses and farming machinery until Ralph was able to start his own farm.

In summer of 1924 one Rev. H.O. Ward was appointed to Terril Methodist Church. Ralph remembered that Rev. Ward was "somewhat unbending, with a very serious countenance both in and out of the pulpit."¹¹ For this reason, Rev. Ward was not popular with the youth in the church. One sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Lana Grace Peso took over the youth ministry. Under her leadership with the youth, Ralph became the youth president of his local church.

In early 1925, the process of discernment was in full force. Ralph was in his senior year at the Lloyd Township Consolidated School with only about a month to graduate from high school when he was told by his high school principal, Mr. Butson, that he should refrain from a career that involved public speaking.

The principal had based his assessment on a number of factors. For one, Ralph had a very high pitched voice. For another, he had not performed well in one of the high school plays and his oral class recitations were less than impressive. Furthermore, Mr. Butson had also noticed Ralph's love of farming and so he suggested to Ralph that he should attend agriculture school. While Ralph agreed with Mr. Butson's assessment on his own passion for farming, he disagreed with the suggestion of attending agriculture

school because he believed his father had taught him everything he needed to know about farming. Therefore, it was then that Ralph decided to forgo attending college.

Instead, he would go into farming like his brother, father and grandfather. Ralph decided that the money he had saved in his savings account would help him establish the farm. Later in life when he was asked if he felt he was destined to be a missionary, Ralph said, “No. I had planned to be a farmer. Even when I graduated from high school I intended to follow a long line of ancestors in this occupation.”¹²

Ralph Dodge’s conversion and call to ministry

However, a significant and transformative event occurred in Ralph’s life during a weeklong Methodist revival in 1925. Fresh from discerning that he was destined for a career in farming, Ralph was about to make a life changing decision. The preacher for the revival was one Rev. Metcalf. As was customary, Ralph joined his family each night at the revival meeting. On the closing night of the revival, sitting by the aisle in the middle section of the sanctuary, Ralph intensely listened to the sermon and felt called to respond. In his own words, he writes, “In 1925 I was converted during a revival in the local Methodist church, and in a moderately traumatic religious experience I made a sincere commitment of my life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.”¹³ Rev. Metcalf’s dramatic use of illustrations captured Ralph’s attention. He was “moved intellectually and emotionally by the logic and illustrations of the sermon.”¹⁴

At the conclusion of the sermon, the Rev. Metcalf called for those who had made a personal decision to follow Christ to come to the altar. As the church rose to sing the

closing hymn, *Just As I Am*, Ralph stood with the congregation and joined in the singing of the hymn. Yet a spiritual war was raging in his mind. It was the sermon that had moved him and now the hymn was making him think about his relationship with Jesus. Somehow, he was convinced that that invitation to follow Christ was for him but he was not going to make himself “a fool by going down to the altar for prayer.”¹⁵

Had he not attended Sunday school since he was a child? How many Sunday school classes had he missed? Everyone he knew—his teachers, friends, neighbors and family—had always said he was a good boy, in fact almost too good. Had he not been told over and over by the parents of the children he picked with his school bus that he was a good and hard- working boy? Was he not the president of the youth group at the church? Had he not stayed occupied most of his time with work on the farm, at home, school and driving the bus to be involved in some mischiefs? What would his parents and friends think about him if he went to the altar? In the midst of these raging thoughts, the invitation still stood and the altar call had to be answered but going to the altar seemed to be too much for him.

Ralph decided he would not make himself a fool by going to the altar. If anything, he could only do half of what Reverend Metcalf’s invitation required. He bowed his head and closed his eyes to avoid seeing the many familiar faces. Thinking that this was better a deal with God, Ralph felt an arm around his shoulders and what came next startled him. “Son, I strongly feel that God is calling you to give your heart to Jesus Christ tonight. Won’t you come to the altar and let us pray together?”¹⁶ This was his pastor, Rev. Ward, speaking to him.

This time, he did not resist. This is what he was waiting for, someone to hold his hand and lead him forward to the altar. Through the Holy Spirit, the message had touched and moved him. Thus, he followed his pastor to the altar. He reached the altar and knelt on the rail. The moment his knee touched the rail, he broke into deep sobs, confessing his sins. Rev. Metcalf and Rev. Ward prayed with him and others who had also come to the altar. “Without knowing its full meaning I had made my public commitment as a professing Christian. Later I did not regret the move, nor was I proud of it; it was one of those decisions one makes in life.”¹⁷ A few Sundays after the revival event, Dodge confirmed his holy baptism he had received as a child and later took membership into the church.

Upon graduation from the Lloyd Township Consolidated High School in May 1925, Ralph decided to work for his brother on the farm. By working for his brother before starting his own farm, Ralph could continue to save his money and prepare for his own future. In the same year, General Motors made the Ford T model more affordable for many families in America. Ralph bought his Ford T from the savings he had made from driving the school bus.

Following his spiritual awakening experience from the revival, Ralph became more involved in the ministries of the church. His pastor, Rev. Ward began to talk to him about pursuing a call to ordained ministry. His pastor sensed that God was calling Ralph to become a preacher. However, Ralph did not feel as though he had the spiritual gifts to preach. For one thing, he considered the words from his high school counselor who discouraged him from public speaking. Ralph writes, “I felt a call to the Christian ministry but I resisted on the basis of ineptitude. Even my high school counselor advised

me against any type of public service, as I was very ill-at-ease on the platform and this tenseness was even evident in my high-pitched voice.”¹⁸

Furthermore, Ralph felt ready to spend his life working on the farm. He firmly believed it was a matter of one, maybe two years of working for his brother before he would be ready to farm on his own. However, once again, things would not go as planned for Ralph. And while it was not an easy decision for him to make, Ralph would begin to realize that God was calling him away from the comfortable setting of farm life and into a vocation that would require the uncomfortable setting of public speaking. Three traumatic events happened within a short time that would confirm a vocational change for Ralph.

First, with the tragic death of his father and the subsequent pastoral care that Rev. Ward showed to the family during and after the funeral, Ralph began to greatly appreciate and understand the work of pastoral life. In the afternoon of August 15, 1925, Ralph was working with his brother ploughing the fields when he saw his sister-in-law Zeola, Orville’s wife, running towards him and waving her hands to signal him. He immediately stopped the tractor to meet a crying Zeola who told him that “Dad has just been killed at a railroad crossing and the little Lewis boy was with him.”¹⁹

Earlier that day, Ralph’s father had gone to Estherville some fourteen miles to deliver milk. On many of his delivery trips to Estherville, children enjoyed traveling with him. On this particular day, his neighbor’s son, a six-year-old boy had asked to go. On crossing the railroad on their way back into town, their truck was hit by a train. Both Ralph’s father and the boy died as a result of the tragedy.

When Ralph returned home, he was in a state of shock as was his mother. Ralph, Orville, and Zeola were each lost in their minds trying to come to terms with the death of Ernest, the husband and father they had relied on for many things. They did not know how to comfort their mother. The entire community mourned the loss of Ernest and the boy. As they sat in the house with their mother, Rev. Ward who had been informed about the death came to give his support for the grieving family. He talked to the family. He encouraged them from the scriptures and prayed with the family. After Rev. Ward's visit, Ralph noted that everyone in the house was calm. His mother was much more composed to talk about the funeral arrangements. In his autobiography, which was written some sixty years after the death of his father, Ralph wrote, "The effect of a pastoral visit at such a time made a big impact on me. Comforting people was an important Christian ministry."²⁰

Following the death of his father, Ralph stayed with his mother while continuing to work for his brother. Rev. Ward continued to check on Ralph and his mother regularly, something which Ralph greatly appreciated because the visits and care helped his mother come to terms with the death of her husband. During this time, Rev. Ward continued to suggest to Ralph about considering ordained ministry and Ralph continued to pay more attention to the idea. He had always wanted to help people and he had seen how Rev. Ward had truly helped his family in this time of intense grief.

A second event of profound experience happened not long after the death of his father. It involved a terrifying experience with a team of runaway horses. Ralph had delivered some grain into town using a wagon that was being pulled by a team of horses. On his way back to his brother's farm, the horses became frightened by something

causing them to run. As he tried to stop them by pulling the reins, one of the reins broke and he lost control of the horses. They began to run wildly pulling the wagon. It was a violent and rough ride. Fearing that the wagon would flip or even worse, Ralph jumped from the wagon and let the horses run. He had few bruises from jumping out of the wagon, but this incident, happening so soon after the death of his father, scared him and led him to ponder more seriously the fragility of mortality and life.

In a third incident, another scary experience, Ralph was nearly electrocuted when a power cord shorted while he was operating a forklift to load some bags of corn in a rail car. Besides working for his brother, Ralph had secured a part time job, working for another farmer to load corn in rail cars. On the day on which he was nearly electrocuted, he worked late in the evening. He needed more light to see and so he had a light bulb on a long extension cord. The cord had a short circuit causing electricity to run through him. He tried to drop the cord but the electricity running through him had completely numbed him. He fell on the floor. There was no one near to help him. Lying on the floor, almost falling unconscious, a bag on a scale fell, releasing some grain that knocked the cord off his hand.

These three incidences happening one after another in a short time and at the time Rev. Ward was talking to Ralph about getting into ministry contributed to Ralph changing course to pursue ordained ministry. Writing about the experience, Ralph conceded, “Perhaps after all, God was telling me that I was in the wrong place and that I should go into His ministry. My mind gave an emphatic ‘no’ but my heart said, ‘possibly so.’”²¹

The decision to go into ministry was not without its own challenges. Even though he was convinced that God was calling him to serve, Ralph still had to overcome many personal issues that hindered the decision to change course. Answering the call to ministry meant he would have to go to college, something Ralph did not desire to do. Furthermore, Ralph was concerned about his mother's health. How could he attend college if it meant he would have to leave his mother as she was still grieving the death of her husband? Then there was his lingering health problem of bedwetting that only his family knew and understood. He writes about the issue saying he "always stayed close to home where there was an understanding family. It was an embarrassment, how could I go to college under those conditions?"²² On top of that, then there was another important barrier for Ralph to go to college, the financial one. He writes, "I had no parental financial backing and very limited personal funds, so I knew I had a hard row ahead of me."²³

Ralph Dodge at Taylor University

Nonetheless, with the support of his pastor, Ralph decided to say "yes" to God's calling in spite of the many reasons he could give that he was not worthy and ready. After one year of wrestling with the idea of going into ministry Ralph enrolled in college. "I figured that God had an even more difficult task ahead of Him if He ever made a minister out of me."²⁴ So on a rainy summer day in July 1926, at the recommendation of a district superintendent, Ralph applied for admission to Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. When he mailed his application, Ralph wrote, "With the new decision came a peace of

mind that I had not known in months. Irrespective of the known difficulties and unknown hardships ahead of me, I was more relaxed and ready to face the future.”²⁵ He was admitted and began to make arrangements to go to Indiana.

The concerns he had about his mother’s well-being and about his bed wetting problem could be solved after all. Instead of living in the university dormitory, Ralph got a fairly cheap house on campus to rent. With this arrangement, his mother agreed to go with him to Taylor University. He needed her to help with house-keeping. He would also care for her. Ralph sold his horses and all the farming equipment he had bought. The money he got from the sales was enough to begin his studies at Taylor. In late August 1926, Ralph drove to Indiana. His mother followed by train a few weeks later.

It cannot be understated that Ralph loved manual and physical work. Growing up on the farm, he had truly become a son of the soil. He loved to work with soil. He loved plants and liked growing them. He loved working in the garden and in the fields. He loved animals and liked to raise them. The outdoor work provided the environment and personal space he cherished. When working, he loved to be by himself partly because he was a very shy person. It explains why he wanted to avoid any career that required public speaking and preaching for that matter.

When Ralph arrived at Taylor University he wanted a job and the only place he looked for employment was at the university greenhouse where he was paid thirty-five cents an hour. In the greenhouse he worked with the university florist, Mrs. Bert Atkinson, who taught Ralph many things about flowers. He got another job on the university farm which provided more work hours. He worked two hours in the morning

from five to seven before classes started and the same hours in the evening after school. On Saturdays, he worked on the farm from five to seven in the morning and then worked in the greenhouse for most of the day.

The workload on the farm and greenhouse and the full time academic load became too heavy for Ralph to carry. One day his mother found him crying in his room. She too was missing her home in Iowa. She wanted to go back and when she found her son crying she suggested that they go back to Iowa. Ralph refused to quit college. She then suggested that he reduced the academic load which he did. Taking few credit hours in school also meant that Ralph would finish his program in five years instead of four.

Ralph's stage fright and high pitched voice was noted by his speech professor, Dr. Barton Rees Pogue. For three years this professor helped him through voice therapy exercises. The results of the therapy were phenomenal. Ralph wrote, "After three years in the speech department, I was able to make it into the university debating team."²⁶

At Taylor University, even though Ralph was always busy with work to pay for his education, he was also overcoming other obstacles, mountains that stood in his way to go to college and finally into ordained ministry. However, it was his faith that allowed him to know that the God he was called to serve could move all the mountainous obstacles that would stand in the way.

When he applied to Taylor at a very late time, God allowed him to still get accepted. When he was worried about being far away from his mother, God provided a house on campus so they could live together. When he only had enough money for one semester of college, God opened the doors for him to secure a job at the university that

would pay for his entire education. Ralph found signs of God's work whenever a mountainous obstacle appeared.

God was also working through him and equipping him for the work of pastoral ministry. The once stage frightened boy with a voice problem was able to now receive therapy for his voice, which led him to joining the university debate team.

As to the problem of bedwetting, that had followed Ralph Dodge since childhood, he believed that God helped him through this obstacle as well. Bed wetting was one of the reasons he brought his mother to Indiana. Bed wetting was the reason he avoided living in the dormitories. He was always embarrassed to wake up every morning with a wet bed. Yet, in his second year at Taylor, at twenty one years of age, Ralph began to experience a gradual decline in bed wetting until it stopped happening. It was a sweet victory for Ralph. He writes, "I finally managed to go through the night without bladder problems. That was a great spiritual as well as a physiological and psychological victory."²⁷

Eventually, when Ralph's mother was ready to return to her home in Terril, Ralph moved into a men's dormitory at Taylor. The experience of living in the dormitory with other peers his age from different walks of life significantly improved Ralph's social life on campus, that had for the first two years at the university revolved solely around work, school and being with his mother. He now began to make many new friends and getting involved in the campus life and activities. "I became active in debating, both intramural and intercollegiate, played basketball in all intramural contests, joined one of the literary

societies, became a reporter on the college newspaper, was involved in Student Volunteers, but all the time continued my work in the greenhouse and on the farm.”²⁸

The love story: Ralph Dodge’s engagement to Eunice Elvira Davis

An increased social life provided an opportunity to meet and socialize with girls his age. When Ralph was in High School he had dated one of his neighbors’ daughter, the Zehnders and it was just that, a high school crush. In his second year at Taylor University Ralph began to once again seriously think about dating. “I was no playboy, but I was human even though during my first year in college I was so bashful that I never once dated a girl. Nevertheless, I knew that I had to break the ice sometime, and now being a sophomore, I felt that I might manage a newcomer.”²⁹

The ice was broken when Ralph met Eunice Davis who was a freshman in a French class but it took him three months to gather the courage to ask Eunice for a date. In the three months, Ralph kept an eye on Eunice and her daily activities. Taylor University’s rules for female and male students to fellowship and mingle outside the classroom were stringent and strictly enforced. During week days, male students were not allowed to go into female dormitories and the same was true for the female students. However, fellowships and dating were allowed on Friday evenings. Ralph used one of the Friday opportunities to ask Eunice for a date. One Friday morning, before chapel service had begun, Ralph waited outside the chapel for Eunice to walk by him. Everyone was required to attend chapel. As she came with her friends, Ralph called her aside and nervously asked, “Miss Davis, may I take you downtown to the Methodist revival

tonight?”³⁰ She agreed and Ralph suggested, “I’ll pick you up at the dorm at seven.”³¹ She nodded and they both entered the chapel using designated doors where they registered their chapel attendances. Ralph was excited to have Eunice agree for a date. “It didn’t matter to me if I were checked present or absent, for I was already in heaven. I had a date with Miss Eunice Davis.”³² These were Ralph’s feelings that Friday morning in the chapel.

Eunice did not know that the man who had asked her for a date had spent the past three months keeping an eye on her, waiting for the confidence to ask her on a date. What was even interesting was that Eunice did not know the name of the man who had asked her for a date. She spent most of the day trying to find someone who knew Ralph. Later in the day, she found a daughter of Ralph’s manager at the greenhouse who knew Ralph well. She told Eunice all she knew about Ralph including his name.

Eunice Elvira Davis was born in Fredonia, New York on June 10, 1910 but lived most of her childhood and youth in Little Valley, New York where she did all her elementary and high school education. She graduated from Salamanca High School in 1927 after she took her junior and senior classes in one year.

On the evening of the date, Ralph went to pick up Eunice and they drove to the church to attend the revival. In church, Ralph held the hymn book for Eunice. After church, he drove her back to her dormitory and bid each other goodnight. For Ralph it was an inauspicious evening as he had broken the ice. At least they knew each other’s names. They dated for a few months and Eunice decided to end the relationship. Ralph was devastated. He could not blame her. It was him who was fully occupied with studies

and work that he had little time for campus social life. Nevertheless, his heart skipped a beat each time he saw her on campus or in class. There was no doubt that Ralph loved Eunice.

Towards the end of his junior year at Taylor University, almost a year after she had ended the relationship, Ralph hesitantly asked Eunice for another date to a senior spring banquet. After the banquet, Ralph took Eunice back to her dormitory. They arrived at the dormitory thirty minutes early before the doors were closed and they decided to stay in the car to talk. That night while they were in the car, Ralph kissed Eunice. Writing about this evening and his first kiss to Eunice, Ralph said, "Eunice was in a gay mood and very responsive. The perfume on the lobe of her ear and the low-cut party dress made her irresistible."³³ Many years later, Eunice wrote a letter to Ralph to remind him of this date night. She writes, "One of the things I noticed about you was your chivalry. Always a gentleman was what I wrote home to my family about the chap I was dating."³⁴ When the spring semester ended, the two had established a very strong relationship.

When they returned for the fall semester, Ralph had made up his mind to ask Eunice to marry him. He sold his cherished fountain pen and with the money he bought an engagement ring. On November 11, 1930, Ralph proposed to Eunice, to which she agreed. They planned to get married in the autumn of 1931 but those plans changed because Ralph wanted to first attend seminary. Eunice agreed on the new plans and together they began to look at seminaries for Ralph to attend. They visited the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He requested some information from Boston University School of Theology in Massachusetts. After much consideration, Ralph decided to go to Boston.

There were three main factors that influenced Ralph to choose Boston University School of Theology over the Presbyterian Theological Seminary. First, at Taylor University, he had the influence of his speech professor, Dr. Barton Rees Pogue who for three years helped Ralph to speak in front of people. Ralph had so much appreciation for Dr. Pogue who had studied at Boston University that when he recommended Boston University for graduate studies, Ralph was ready to seriously consider. Second, at Taylor University, Ralph had been taught a theological perspective that had strong emphasis on personal salvation. Ralph had read Walter Rauschenbusch's works and found out that Boston University School of Theology had moved in the direction of the Walter Rauschenbusch's tradition. Ralph said, "I deeply appreciated the emphasis upon personal salvation through faith which I had received from Taylor but I also wanted to know the Scriptural and theological basis the strong emphasis upon the social application of the Gospel."³⁵ Third, when Ralph received a letter of acceptance to study for the Bachelor of Sacred Theology degree from Boston University. He was awarded a generous scholarship.

Ralph graduated from Taylor University on June 10, 1931 with a bachelor of arts degree after five years of hard work in classes, greenhouse and on the farm. He had put himself through college paying for his own tuition. Eunice also graduated the same year with a Bachelor's degree in English and an Indiana teacher's certificate. Later in the summer of 1932, Eunice studied French at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and also completed the requirements for a New York teacher's certification.

After graduation at Taylor University, Dodge went back to Iowa and worked for his brother on the farm for the summer as he waited to begin his graduate studies at

Boston in the fall. While he did not make much money working for his brother because of the Great Depression, he was able to save one hundred dollars. He left Terril for Boston with hundred dollars. His brother realizing that Ralph had not saved much money tried to prevent him from going to Boston, pointing out that with such little money Ralph would be back in Iowa after one month. “I was relaxed. God had seen me through five years of college. If he was calling me to be a minister of the Gospel, He would see me through my studies.”³⁶

Boston University: Student pastorate and marriage

Ralph took a train from his town to Chicago where he took another train to New York City on his way to Boston. He detoured to visit Eunice in Little Valley, New York where she had returned after graduating from Taylor University to teach High School English at Little Valley High School. After seeing Eunice in Little Valley, Ralph proceeded to Boston, arriving at Boston University on August 15, 1931. With only one hundred dollars to his name, Ralph realized he needed to secure employment. He received a job as a busboy at a downtown restaurant that only served lunch. The restaurant opened for business from Monday through Friday and opened its doors at 11:30 in the morning and closed at 2:00 in the afternoon. Ralph’s job was to collect dishes from the tables, clean the tables and take the dishes to the kitchen. For his job, he was paid two dollars a week and the job allowed him to have two meals a day – one before he started and another meal after he finished his work. Ralph’s morning classes

ended at 11:20 AM and he had ten minutes to run to his work and his afternoon classes began at 2:45 PM.

Unlike Taylor University, Boston University's student community was more culturally diverse. The student community included men and women from most of the states in the USA as well as several from other countries. Ralph appreciated that the student body was interracial. At Boston University, he had the first real experience of being in a community with people from other races. He was serious with his studies to make him an average "B" student which in the second year qualified him to transfer some credit hours to the Graduate School for a Master's degree program.

The opportunity to serve as a local church pastor came when Ralph was in his third year at Boston University. A small Congregational Church of Forestdale in north Malden, Massachusetts had declared its pulpit open after the General Board of the Congregational denomination could no longer financially supply a pastor for the church because of its small membership. For many churches across the United States, the effects of the Great Depression took a heavy toll. Salaries were cut and services had to be reduced. For ten dollars, Ralph accepted and was hired to preach Sunday evening services.

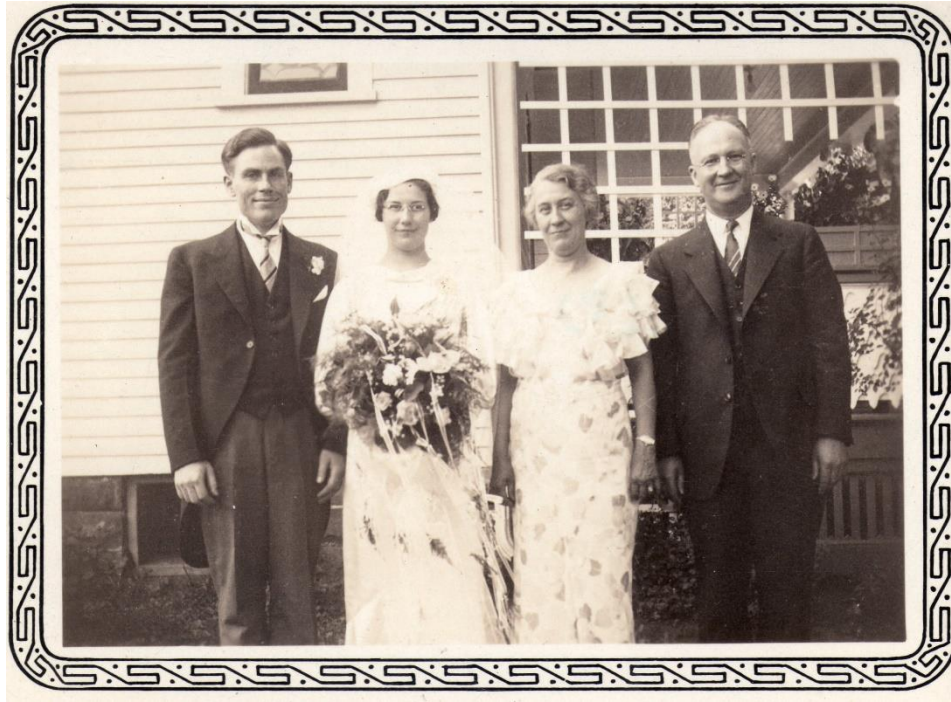
Under the leadership of Ralph, the church made the important decision to declare its autonomy as a community church, moving away from its Congregational affiliation. This transition turned out to be a success as the membership of the church expanded beyond the Nova Scotian affiliation. With more people coming to the church, Ralph's salary was raised to twenty dollars per week and he saw his church responsibilities

increase. Beyond meeting and leading worship on Sunday evenings, Ralph made pastoral visitations on Friday afternoons and Saturdays. This enabled him to keep his job at the restaurant. About the church and community of Forestdale, Ralph wrote, “The people were very friendly. As is usually the case with young preachers, the congregation taught me more than I was able to teach them.”³⁷ When Ralph and Eunice made wedding plans following Ralph’s graduation from seminary in 1934, the church was very supportive of their pastor’s wedding by giving Ralph a fifty percent raise.

Ralph and Eunice planned for a small wedding ceremony at Eunice’s parents’ home. They were married in Little Valley on June 28, 1934. While Ralph’s family was not able to attend his wedding, Eunice’s sister, niece and brother made up the bridal team for the wedding.



Ralph and Eunice wedding party on June 18, 1934.



For their honeymoon, Ralph and Eunice rented a cottage for a week by Lake Chautauqua in New York, before visiting Ralph's family in Iowa. In Malden, Massachusetts, a member of his church, Mrs. Leah Johnson, had an up-stair room in her home that she had turned into an independent furnished apartment for Ralph and Eunice to rent once they were married. When they returned home from the honeymoon, they found the refrigerator in their apartment loaded with food. The church had bought some food supplies for the new family.

Since Ralph's work with the church was not a full-time position, both he and Eunice decided to continue their studies by returning to school and enrolling at Gordon Seminary. Ralph writes, "Having spent three years under liberal professors [at Boston], I felt the need of a different viewpoint, and Gordon was considered more orthodox. We both registered for some classes for the second semester."³⁸

Ministry in North Dakota

While at Gordon Seminary, Ralph received word from a student at Boston University School of Theology about a need for pastors in North Dakota area of The Methodist Episcopal Church. From her days at Taylor University, Eunice had been a devoted member of the Student Volunteers and that was the sole reason Ralph ever joined the group. Since he wanted to be with her, the Student Volunteers had been an opportunity for Ralph to spend some time with his girlfriend. Eunice had grown up as the oldest daughter of a banker who was a strongly committed lay leader in the church. Every time missionaries came to speak at their church, they were hosted by Eunice's parents who supported many missionaries. So, she grew up hearing stories of missionaries which created a desire for her to become a missionary.

As members of the Student Volunteer Movement both Eunice and Ralph were prepared for missionary service but the Depression had discouraged them especially Eunice to seek a missionary assignment abroad. Eunice was reading stories about how the Great Depression was affecting the support for missionaries. Missionaries who were on furlough from overseas mission fields were being advised to remain in the United States and find other jobs after their furloughs ended. For this reason Eunice did not bother to reach out to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Church to apply.

In the Dakotas, a combination of the Depression and successive drought seasons had severely affected many people. Many people left the Dakotas to go the West Coast. The result was that some pastors followed their parishioners to the West Coast leaving some congregations without pastors. When Ralph shared with Eunice the opportunity to

serve as home or national missionaries in the drought stricken Dakotas they both agreed that it was an opportunity and an appointment they were interested to pursue. Ralph reached out to a District Superintendent in North Dakota to inquire about the possibility of a pastorate.

While Ralph had seen growth and opportunity at the Community Church in Forestdale, he felt isolated professionally, without a network of supportive colleagues and peers. He and Eunice both agreed that getting back in the Methodist connection would best meet their professional needs. Within ten days of their inquiry, they were informed through a letter that their service was urgently needed in Mohall, North Dakota. About the request to go to North Dakota, Ralph wrote, “One of my God-given qualities is being responsive to sincere appeals for help.”³⁹ In the letter they were informed that his salary “would be what the people could put on the offering plate each week plus a missions subsidy... and the people of the town would not let us starve, even if the farmers could not contribute much cash, due to the six years of drought.”⁴⁰

Their decision to go to North Dakota was partly based on the understanding and interpretation that they were going to a mission field given the conditions that prevailed in the Dakotas at the moment. For them they were answering a call to take a home mission assignment in North Dakota. At this time Ralph had become a provisional member of the Erie Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church which included some areas of New York and Pennsylvania.

Ralph and Eunice bade farewell to the Community Church in Forestdale after Christmas of 1934. They had scheduled to arrive in Mohall, North Dakota towards the

end of January of 1935. They packed their belongings in suitcases and loaded them in a Greyhound bus. “So, we closed our affairs in Malden, took a Greyhound from Boston, and headed west. It was a wearisome, long haul,”⁴¹ Eunice recalled. The Greyhound bus took them to Fargo, North Dakota where they connected on another bus to Mohall.

They arrived in Mohall, a town with a population of approximately 680 people, on a very cold January afternoon. Their instruction was to contact a local dentist, Dr. Movius who was a member of the church that Ralph was assigned. Dr. Movius and his family hosted Ralph and Eunice for several days while the church renovated the parsonage that had stayed unoccupied for many months. It was an old house that was heated by coal in the winter. When the parsonage was ready, Ralph and Eunice moved in, even though it was unfurnished. They used the money they had saved from the wedding gifts to buy furniture from the local Sears store.

In Forestdale, Ralph realized that the congregation and community appreciated and had depended on his home visits. However, in Mohall, since the congregation had gone for many months without a pastor, they were not used to pastors’ home visits. Ralph connected with people through home visits and within a few months he had connected with many people in the community including the local business community some of whom allowed him and Eunice to get some groceries on credit whenever they did not have enough money to pay. The weekly offering at the church from which he was paid ranged from fourteen to twenty-five dollars. When Ralph received his salary supplement from the conference’s home missions fund, they bought a ten-year-old Buick for twenty-five dollars which they named Beulah. Several churches around Mohall did not have

pastors. With the vehicle, Ralph was able to travel to some of these churches to offer pastoral support.

Missionaries to Africa: Ordination and commission

In March, 1935, Ralph attended a district conference in Jamestown, North Dakota where he was introduced to other pastors in the district. An Executive Secretary of the Board of Missions, Dr. John R. Edwards, and the guest speaker at the district conference, shared at the district conference that there was an urgent need for a missionary in Angola, Africa to replace a missionary who had suffered a stroke. Even in the midst of the Great Depression, the Board of Missions had resolved that a new missionary was needed in Angola. As Dr. Edwards spoke, Ralph's attention was caught by the need for a missionary in Angola. Immediately following the speech, Ralph stepped forward to introduce himself to Dr. Edwards. He shared with him his own interest in the possibility of him filling the position in Angola.

When the conference was over, Dr. Edwards wrote down Ralph and Eunice's names and address promising to send them some application forms to fill out and return. Ralph anxiously returned home to tell Eunice what Dr. Edwards had said about Angola and his conversation with him.

Ten days after the district conference, Ralph and Eunice received the application forms from the Board of Missions. There was a plethora of questions to answer on the application forms. For many days, Ralph and Eunice went through all of the questions and they started to doubt whether they really wanted to be missionaries in overseas

mission fields. They had just moved to North Dakota and were received by the community in Mohall. They had spent part of their own money to remodel the parsonage and Eunice had worked hard to make the parsonage pleasant. The idea of leaving Mohall was not easy to entertain.

As a result, they agreed to put the application forms aside and go to God in prayer. Ralph and Eunice studied the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 and they were reminded and convinced of Jesus' message in the Great Commission. Ralph writes, "We would have been very happy to have had a ministry in the State. But, as a young preacher I came up against the fact that I can't preach 'Go ye into all the world' to other people, unless I am willing to go myself."⁴²

Ready to move forward, and with renewed confidence through Christ's call through the Great Commission, Ralph and Eunice decided to fill out the application forms resolving that if God wanted them to go overseas their application would be accepted and that if God wanted them to stay in the United States, their application would be rejected. It was now in God's hands. In order to confirm their own fears and anxieties, they hoped their application would be rejected by the board. Yet, after much prayer, they mailed the application forms anyway in late April.

A few weeks later, in mid-May, they received a letter from the Board of Missions requesting their presence in Chicago in order to meet with the regional committee. They would also need to meet with a doctor for physical examinations as life and diet in Africa would be far different than what they came to expect at home. The date suggested by regional committee for the meeting and interview conflicted with some of the plans that

Ralph had scheduled. Ralph had already accepted an invitation to give a commencement address at a local high school as well as a Memorial Day speech in the town. Yet, this would not stop the meeting from taking place and therefore, the meeting was rescheduled for July.

When the time came to go for the meeting, Ralph and Eunice drove their Buick to Chicago, passing through Iowa to visit his family. At this time, Eunice was pregnant and the trip was characterized by many stops because Eunice was sick. On the day of the interview, Ralph and Eunice faced the regional committee which was made up of ten members and chaired by Dr. Eislen who was President of Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston near Chicago. It was a grueling interview. Dr. Eislen asked him, “Are you certain that the motivation for going to Africa is not to get away from the cold winters in North Dakota?”⁴³ Ralph replied, “Sir, and members of the committee, we do not have to go to Africa to get away from North Dakota. I am a member of the Erie Conference in Pennsylvania.”⁴⁴

The committee asked Ralph and Eunice many questions concerning their background, theology, interests and motivations. The interview would take all morning. They were relieved when they were told they could go for physical examinations and return the next morning. After the physical examinations, Ralph and Eunice tried to walk around Chicago to shop but their walk was cut short when Eunice collapsed and fainted. The pregnancy, exhaustion and anxiety had taken toll on Eunice. Ralph and some people who saw her fall helped to revive her. Ralph took her to their hotel room to rest for the day.

The following morning, they met the committee and were informed that they had passed the interview. “Because of Eunice’s linguistic ability and my Taylor-Boston background, the committee looked with favor upon us for the William Taylor Institute in Angola,”⁴⁵ Ralph recalled in an interview for the *Taylor Magazine*. The committee wanted them to attend the School of Missions in Hartford, Connecticut for training beginning Mid-September. They were told to go back to Mohall, sell their furniture, and prepare to go the School of Missions for orientation. This surprised Eunice who thought they could go with their furniture. Ralph recalls Eunice exclaiming, “What! Sell our precious furniture that has taken all our wedding money? How we hated to see that nice furniture going for half price! But we were assured that we would find the mission home furnished.”⁴⁶

They returned to Mohall, and shared with the church about the new ministry plan to go to Angola. While the church regretted the departure of their promising young pastor and wife, they were also very understanding and supportive about their pastor and his wife becoming missionaries. Indeed, the task of preparing to move again was a daunting one.

In a letter to her parents in Little Valley, New York, Eunice informed them of the new opportunity to serve as missionaries in Angola. Mr. Davis, Eunice’s father made it clear in a reply to her letter that he was not thrilled with such sudden changes and moves. Even more so, he was quite unhappy that his daughter was going to “darkest Africa” carrying his first grandchild. “Why don’t you stay in North Dakota?” he wrote to her. “At least we could get on a train to go there!”⁴⁷

Meanwhile, Ralph worried about telling his mother that he was going to Africa. He had always been worried about his mother's health as long as he could remember. The thought of leaving her burdened him, but even more so, he dreaded having to tell her of his departure.

On their way to Hartford, they planned to attend the Erie Annual Conference in Ridgway, Pennsylvania. At this annual conference, Ralph would be ordained an elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church. They decided to visit their families starting in Iowa. They spent a day in Iowa with Ralph's family. The visit was short. They had to go and he wandered how he would break the news to his mother. He gained the courage when he was about to leave at the end of the visit. Standing by the car he said, "Mother, I must tell you that we are bound for Africa on a missionary assignment." He said it carefully looking at how his mother would react. His mother's response was far different than the one given by Eunice's father to his daughter. To his relief, she replied, "Son, I've never told you this before because I didn't want it to influence you. When you were born, your father and I dedicated you to the Lord. I have been expecting something like this would happen all the time. Go in peace, and the Lord be with you."⁴⁸

Indeed, the words she spoke to him were profound because they brought a new understanding of his calling. The fears and worries he had about his mother were gone. He could go forward with his mission in Angola and not have to worry about or regret the decision to leave her. They said good bye and Ralph hugged his mother as tears were shed. Ralph was relieved and more importantly this was the confirmation that he was deeply yearning and praying for. Once again, God had helped him overcome mountainous obstacles. And now, God was leading them to Africa!

Eunice and Ralph arrived in Little Valley before the Annual Conference began. Eunice's father was a lay delegate to the annual conference. Also, unknown to Ralph and Eunice was that Dr. Edwards, the Executive Secretary of the Board of Missions had planned to attend the Annual Conference to witness Ralph's ordination and to participate in their commissioning as missionaries to Africa. Dr. Edwards also wanted to appeal for financial support for their salary and the work in Angola.

In the service of ordination, Ralph was ordained and received as an elder in The Methodist Church. After ordination, Dr. Edwards was asked by the bishop to present Rev. Ralph and Mrs. Eunice Dodge. Dr. Edwards asked if any of Ralph and Eunice's family members were present to stand. He then called Eunice's father, Mr. Davis to come forward and asked him, "Mr. Davis, are you willing that your daughter should be sent to Africa?"⁴⁹ Mr. Davis hesitated and almost crying, he replied, "God helping me, I am."⁵⁰ Both Ralph and Eunice needed to hear this. It was an emotional send off.

Orientation at Hartford and birth of child

When the annual conference session ended, Ralph and Eunice got on a train to Hartford, Connecticut to be trained as missionaries to Africa. When Ralph and Eunice started their orientation at Hartford, the School of Missions had fully embraced the recommendations of the 1910 World Missionary Conference that missionaries on the mission fields were to be trained to understand that the evangelization of the world was not alone a Western enterprise but equally an Asian and African enterprise. To this regard, the missionaries were to train and "develop strong native evangelistic staff,

working in co-operation with the foreign force” because the work of making “Christ known to the multitudinous inhabitants of the non-Christian world must be done by the sons and daughters of the soil.”⁵¹

Ralph and Eunice thoroughly enjoyed their classes at Hartford School of Missions. When they started their training at Hartford in Mid-September of 1935, Eunice’s pregnancy was four months. By December, the doctor at Hartford was getting concerned with Eunice’s pregnancy. He feared that Eunice could give birth before the due date. The doctor recommended that Eunice be released from the training early to give her some time to rest. She went back to Little Valley to live with her parents. They had found a family doctor in Little Valley.

Ralph went to Little Valley during the Christmas break and stayed to witness the birth of his child. The advisors at the School of Missions had urged him to witness the delivery of his child as way to prepare him for cases in the mission field where he might be called to help to deliver a baby. Eunice gave birth on January 14, 1936. They named the baby Ralph Edward, Jr. He informed the Board of Missions about the birth of his son and health condition of Eunice. He writes,

At four fifteen this afternoon, Eunice presented to the world a strong eight and half pound boy. When I left the hospital this afternoon, she was still under the influence of the chloroform, but we are going down for a brief period tonight, although she did have a very difficult time we are confident that she will be as well and strong as ever in a few weeks.⁵²

Ralph returned to Hartford to continue with his training while Eunice and the baby would join him there in March.

Ralph was excited and impressed by the training at the missionary school. He wrote, "In addition to factual information, we were deeply motivated by the new mission philosophy: That to be effective the missionary should quickly train indigenous people to do the work to which he or she had been assigned, and then move on to some other job. No missionary would be considered effective if he or she perpetuated himself or herself indefinitely in any given job, we were told. This was something new which emphasized the urgent development of local people. But it was also frightening to career missionaries who liked to consider themselves indispensable."⁵³

In Angola, where the Dodges were to serve they were seriously understaffed and the Board of Missions wanted to send the Dodges straight to the mission field after their training at Hartford. On December 14, 1935 Thomas Donohugh wrote a letter to Dodge stating, "Personally, I heartily favor thorough preparation for missionary service in Africa or in other fields and I believe that it pays in the long run. However, they are so short-handed in Angola that the pressure for your early arrival has been unusually strong."⁵⁴ The Board of Missions wanted Dodge to go to Angola and learn the Portuguese language in Angola instead of going to the language school in Portugal.

Dodge insisted that going to Portugal first for their language school was important for them to be successful in their missionary endeavors. He reminded the Board of Missions that hastening to send them to Angola without the necessary language skills would be a recipe for ineffective missions. He writes,

We fear that the pressure of immediate tasks is going to be so great as soon as we reach Quessua, that it will be impossible to perfect our Portuguese. If our first contacts with the government officials are important as they seem, we dislike very much to make unfavorable first impressions. We feel that a good beginning may be more important than and early beginning. We want to be as efficient as possible.”⁵⁵

The Board of Missions arranged for the sailing date to Angola to be May 2, 1936. When the day finally came, the young missionary couple and baby sailed to Lisbon, Portugal for the final piece of training, albeit an important one, to study Portuguese, the primary and official language of Angola.



Ralph and Eunice Dodge with little Ed in their family passport photo

They arrived in Lisbon on May 10 and were received by one Miss Sawyer from Britain who was studying in Lisbon. It was Miss Sawyer who recommended a Portuguese Language tutor to the Dodes. They stayed in Lisbon for three months to complete the

Portuguese language studies under the tutorage of Miss Price. They were kept in Lisbon for three more months after their language studies because of the Spanish civil war and revolution which broke out on July 17, 1936. The three months they stayed longer in Portugal qualified them to get a resident permit for Portugal and subsequently for Angola after taking a Portuguese language proficient test. While in Portugal, Dodge learned that the Portuguese disliked the title “missionary,” so, he wrote a letter to the Board on Missions to advise them. In the letter he says,

Concerning our work in Angola, we have learnt that in all our dealings here, we do not use the term missionary in answering any questions or in any documents. It is to be regretted that our passport designates us as missionaries. We are instructed to call ourselves teachers. That is a good tip to pass on to any missionaries going to Portuguese territory.⁵⁶

In early November of 1936, following the landslide re-election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the United State, the Dodges sailed directly from Lisbon to Luanda, Angola on the S.S. Mouzinho. The reality of their call to be missionaries set in as they were on board sailing to Angola. The circumstances that had led Ralph one step at a time from Terril, Iowa to Taylor University in Upland, Indiana where he met Eunice; from Taylor University to Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts, to a little pastorate in Malden, into marriage and then to North Dakota for less than a year all proved to Ralph that together with his wife, they were answering God’s call. Ralph said, “I don’t think we would have ever gone to Africa if we had not gone to North Dakota and shown our willingness to go into rather difficult situation. So, I felt that it has been more or less step-by-step, with fairly good assurance that each step was the Lord’s will.”⁵⁷ Now with their

ten-month-old Ralph Edward Jr. they would begin a new chapter of life in Angola, and their lives would be ever transformed as a result.

Notes

- ¹ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*. (Tucson: Wheatmark, 1986), 4.
- ² Ralph E. Dodge, *The Pagan Church: The Protestant Failure in America* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1968), 18.
- ³ Ibid., 7.
- ⁴ Anne Sewell, *Black Beauty: The Autobiography of a Horse* (Chicago: Donohue, Henneberry & Co. Publishers, 1877).
- ⁵ Ibid., 83.
- ⁶ Ibid., 157
- ⁷ Ibid., 165-166.
- ⁸ Ralph Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 8.
- ⁹ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Church and Prayer*, (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, ?), 3.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 9.
- ¹² Will Cleveland, "No More Encores," Taylor University Magazine, Summer 1981, 3.
- ¹³ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 9.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Church and Personal Dedication*, (Umtali: Rhodesia Press, ?) 5.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Cleveland, "No More Encores," 3.
- ¹⁹ Dodge, *The Church and Personal Dedication*, 6.
- ²⁰ Ibid., *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 12.
- ²¹ Ibid., 13.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Cleveland, "No More Encores," 3.
- ²⁴ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 13.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 15.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 16.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid., 17.
- ³⁴ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Ralph E. Dodge, February 10, 1967.
- ³⁵ Ibid. 18.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 20.
- ³⁸ Ibid. 21.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 24.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Cleveland, "No More Encores," 4.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 24.
- ⁴⁸ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 25.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ World Missionary Conference, 1910. "To Consider Missionary Problems in Relation to the non-Christian World." (Vol. 1), 368.

⁵² Ralph E. Dodge, Letter to Dr. Thomas Donohugh, January 14, 1936.

⁵³ Dodge, *Revolutionary Bishop*, 25

⁵⁴ Thomas Donohugh, Letter to Dodge, December 16, 1935.

⁵⁵ Ralph E. Dodge, Letter to Dr. Thomas Donohugh, December 11, 1935.

⁵⁶ Ralph E. Dodge, Letter to Dr. Thomas Donohugh, May 17, 1936.

⁵⁷ Cleveland, "No More Encores," Taylor University Magazine, Summer 1981, 4.

CHAPTER TWO

MISSIONARIES IN ANGOLA 1936 - 1941

Ministry in Luanda

“Luanda! Luanda!” That was the shout that Ralph and Eunice Dodge heard from their second class cabin on Tuesday morning, December 1, 1936. Ralph picked up their ten- month- old son, and with Eunice following him, the family excitedly rushed the two flights of stairs up to the main deck of the ship to grab their first glimpse of Luanda, the capital city of the Portuguese colony of Angola which was founded in 1575 by the Portuguese.

As they gazed across the sprawling red tile roofs of houses and businesses along the shore, it came as a relief to know they had finally made it to Africa. As the *S.S. Mouzinho* anchored half a mile offshore in the Luanda Bay, the Dodge’s hurriedly returned to their cabin to prepare their belongings.

The Dodges were not the first Methodist missionaries to arrive in Luanda. Fifty one years earlier, a group of forty-five missionaries under the leadership of Bishop William Taylor arrived in Luanda on March 20, 1885. The Portuguese governor of Angola who had received Bishop Taylor was leery of the delegation and reported to the government in Portugal saying,

A collection of fifty some Americans presided over by a Methodist Bishop Taylor arrived here. Their poor, miserable appearance makes it seem that they are composed of fanatics with an exaggerated religious spirit with their sick minds influenced by the most extravagant doctrines. They think that they can live here without help, maintaining themselves on the basis of “self-supporting missions,” which will produce in practice – as I see it – complete disappointment. Beside the religious missionaries, strictly speaking, they brought musicians, mechanics, women and children, one being trained in medicine to the homeopathic school.¹

Fifty-one years later, when the Dodge family arrived in Luanda, Angola, there was no government official to receive them, which may have been best considering the family arrived in at a time when the political and economic policies of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar’s regime in Portugal was causing indignation among the Africans in Angola.² Greeting them upon arrival was Rev. and Mrs. August Klebsattel, an elderly missionary couple from Germany who had arrived in Angola in 1916, who would help them move about in the busy and active capital city.

The very first day in Luanda had its own surprises for the new missionary family. Before the trip, the Board of Missions had assigned the Dodges to Quessua mission station, a small community approximately one hundred and eighty miles from Luanda, where Ralph would teach at a Bible School. However, upon arrival Ralph Dodge was informed that the plans for him to go to Quessua had changed.

Dodge was informed that Bishop Springer had appointed him to be the pastor at the Methodist Church in Luanda city and that he would be assisted by an African pastor, the Rev. Agostinho Pedro Neto. In spite of his age and experience, Ralph Dodge was surprised to learn that he was not only going to stay in Luanda, but he was also going to

be the interim District Superintendent for the Luanda district, an area that covered one hundred and fifty miles.

Furthermore, Ralph Dodge was told he was going to be the only Methodist missionary in Luanda. Rev. Klebsattel informed him, “Since the Shields retired, and with the Kemps on furlough, there are only three men left on the field. The other two, Withey and Edling, have always been in the interior. They are needed there; so, while we are on furlough, you will take over the Luanda city and district work.”³

To make matters more concerning for the Dodges was that since the Klebsattels were preparing to leave for their furlough, this meant they would be left alone. Ralph realized that Rev. Klebsattel, who in fact was the current District Superintendent of Luanda District and the pastor in charge at the Luanda mission, was the man he had come to replace. Undoubtedly, the change of plans, both in location and job responsibilities, was a lot for this young family to ponder, even before they had the time to acclimate to a new place on the other side of the equator.

One of Eunice’s main concerns was that there was no house ready for them to live. The Klebsattels took them in their home, an arrangement which Eunice accepted, but she was not comfortable. The only available house was being used by young Angolans who were attending school at the mission center. When the students eventually moved from the house, it was unfurnished, prompting Eunice to write to the Board of Missions secretary saying,

We are very disappointed in one thing. From the Manual for Missionaries printed in 1934 we read, ‘Upon arrival on the field and after appointment, the missionary will be furnished with living quarters and necessary heavy furniture...’ When we left North Dakota, we were foolish enough to believe everything printed in the Manual and consequently sold our new furniture at about half the price we had paid. Now we find a bare house with not even so much a stove!⁴

In the evening of their first day in Luanda, as the reality of the new assignments began to sink in, the Dodges were taken to church for a midweek service of prayer and praise with approximately three hundred people in attendance. For the Dodges, this was an important moment. Rev. Klebsattel formally introduced Ralph Dodge as the new pastor of the Hartzell Memorial Church, mission station chairman, and District Superintendent of the Luanda District. Eunice was assigned to be both the director of women’s work and the mission primary school. Dodge writes, “Here we were – young, inexperienced, newcomers to Africa, given positions of seniority over veterans like Rev. Neto.”⁵

A few days after Dodge arrived in Angola, Rev. Klebsattel began to show him the district and some of the Methodist mission stations outside Luanda. Dodge quickly realized that the training at Hartford, which emphasized that a new missionary in the first year was to be seen and not heard, was irrelevant in Luanda. In his new role, the congregation and the district expected to hear from him.⁶ Rev. Klebsattel wanted to acquaint Dodge with the ministries of the church before he left for his furlough.

On one of the visits they met Rev. Hebert Withey at Malange. Withey was one of the two missionaries serving in the country’s interior. Withey had come to Angola in

1885 at the age of twelve with his parents and three sisters. He was part of the first group of missionaries that Bishop Taylor had brought to Angola in 1885. While Withey had experienced tragedy when his three sisters died a few months upon arrival in Angola, the fact that he had grown up in Angola gave him an opportunity to become proficient in Kimbundu, one of the major indigenous languages in Angola. When the Portuguese issued a decree in December, 1921, to ban the teaching of the native languages in Angola, Hebert Withey continued with his work to translate the Bible into Kimbundu insisting, “It is the language which reaches their hearts, and we do not hesitate to predict that it will continue to be used, and hold its own, long after all the present day actors will have passed away.”⁷ Hebert’s parents had retired from missionary work and were living in California. At the time of Dodge’s visit Withey’s wife and children had moved to Cape Town in South Africa because her health was failing. However, Hebert Withey remained in Angola to finish his translation of the Old Testament into Kimbundu. Dodge was impressed by Withey’s story and commitment to the missionary work.

Within a week after their meeting, Dodge received the word that Withey had passed away. Dodge rushed to Malange to help take care of the funeral arrangements. Since there was no embalment, Dodge arranged for the funeral to be the next day. Withey’s family was not at the funeral but hundreds of Africans who knew Withey attended. Dodge writes, “As the coffin was lowered into the grave there was a hush in the wailing and weeping for a beloved missionary.”⁸

The significant event of Withey’s funeral and how the Africans mourned him made a lasting impression on Dodge. He had witnessed how much the Angolans loved Herbert Withey. They had celebrated his life as though he was family. The Angolans

were Withey's family. In many ways, Dodge yearned for that same kind of relationship with the Angolans as he began his mission. For the Angolans, Withey had truly understood them and identified with their needs. His life and ministry had provided the Angolans what European colonialism and exploitation had not: love, solidarity and compassion.

With the experience of Withey's funeral behind him, and a greater understanding of what it meant to love and serve his brothers and sisters in Angola, Dodge quickly learned that his surprise appointment in Luanda was in fact an opportunity for him to better understand the political and economic environment of Angola. With Luanda being the capital city, he would encounter the Portuguese government officials at many levels. Furthermore, many of the other mission stations and even those of different denominations, such as the United Church of Canada, English Baptists and other independent societies, often relied on the Methodist missionary in Luanda to help them to deal with government officials. It was an important appointment and assignment, one where Dodge acknowledged becoming the "glorified errand boy for the Protestant missions" in Angola.⁹

In order to work together on many important issues of commonality, The Protestant churches in Angola had formed a loosely organized group called the Evangelical Alliance of Angola. In 1937, Dodge was elected the Executive Secretary of the group. As the executive secretary, Dodge not only represented the organization's interests to the government but he was also the main contact person in Luanda. The position entailed hosting a number of visitors belonging to the Evangelical Alliance, and sometimes unexpectedly.

On one account, at two o'clock in the morning, Eunice heard a knock on the door of their house. She woke up her sleeping husband and alerted him that there was someone outside. They went out and they saw three cars in the driveway and a voice said, "We are sorry to be late, but we had some more car trouble on our way here." Seeing that the Dodges looked surprised, the man asked, "You didn't receive our telegram? I'm Sid Gilchrist of the United Church of Christ. We were attending a medical conference up north. Altogether there are fourteen of us. Can you possibly put us up for the night?"¹⁰ The visitors ended up staying two more nights with the Dodges as Ralph assisted them in the scheduling of meetings with government officials.

Portuguese policy of assimilation

While Ralph and the missionaries had come to Angola to save souls, other Europeans had come for economic purposes. The Portuguese had claimed Angola at the Berlin Conference of 1884 for its natural resources. In 1923, Diffendorfer described Angola in the following way:

Angola - a land of promise. Angola, the Portuguese province in West Africa is one of the largest political divisions of Africa, and potentially one of the richest. From the steaming swamps and foam-flecked sands of the coast, the land rises through a district of wooded mountains and flowery valleys with here and there a sandy stretch, slime swamps, and aimless rivers – to wide, wind-swept plateaus where the grass grows higher than a man's head and weighed down in the morning by dews as heavy as rain.¹¹

Angola was rich in minerals with large deposits of iron ore. The word Angola literally means "a piece of iron." There were large deposits of diamonds throughout the country, and later on, oil became the most valuable discovery in Angola. In agriculture, Angola's

climate was conducive for growing coffee, pineapples and trees from which rubber is made, something that the Portuguese and their former colony, Brazil had tremendous experience in harvesting, and had brought about the extravagant rubber boom in the area of Manaus, Brazil in the late 19th Century.

When Dodge arrived in Angola in 1936 there were about four million people living in the country. Of the four million people, forty-four thousand were Europeans, twenty-eight were of mixed races and the rest were indigenous Angolans.¹² Portuguese men constituted the highest number of the Europeans. Such as the policy was with other European nations in their colonies, a large number of Portuguese men in Angola were exiled criminals who were forced to serve their sentences working in Angola instead of the jail cells in Portugal. For European powers, this was less expensive and productive. These exiled criminals were known as *degradados*.¹³ And while a few hundred Portuguese women lived in Angola, most of them were also exiled criminals.

The small number of Portuguese women in Angola contributed to the growing mixed population of *mestizos*. Most of the *mestizo* population lived in and around Luanda, where there were jobs and opportunities to be promoted to key government and business positions. Just like the Portuguese, the *mestizos* were nominally Roman Catholic, of which they held key positions in the church and its ministries such as schools and hospitals.¹⁴

By the time the Dodges arrived in Angola, Portugal had enacted a policy of assimilation throughout its colonies. It was a program in which Africans could earn Portuguese citizenship by adopting the Portuguese standard of living. Those who assimilated were required to fluently speak Portuguese. The program also demanded that those wishing to assimilate must attain a certain level of education and income. Local government officials were designated to carry out the assimilation examinations. In such cases corruption thrived. Dodge noted that “if there was adequate negotiation under the table, the applicant usually passed.”¹⁵ In reality, the assimilation policy ended up being a very expensive process that though economically advantageous in the long run, one that majority of Angolans could not afford.

At the Methodist mission center in Luanda, Dodge’s associate pastor and neighbor, Rev. Agostinho Pedro Neto was an *assimilado*. As a result, all of his six children enjoyed the privileges of Portuguese citizenship which included the ability to attend government schools in Angola as well as government colleges in Portugal. In Dodge’s congregation in Luanda, there were a few *assimilado* families, who were considered middle class due to their social and economic statuses. Even in Dodge’s congregation, there were a few assimilated families who were considered to be middle class due to their social and economic status.

The Methodist mission centers in Luanda and throughout Angola were known as the American missions, a misnomer Dodge tried to correct without success. Dodge preferred the term “Methodist centers” over that of any geographical designation that could distort or misrepresent the work of the gospel. Most of the people who came to church at the Methodist mission lived in very poor sections of Luanda. As the city grew,

Europeans, *mestizos* and *assimilados* purchased lands that were near business centers, schools and hospitals, often causing prices of land to skyrocket, which in turn pushed the poor further away from these important parts of the city.

Ralph Dodge as District Superintendent

Dodge's appointments to Luanda as pastor of the mission center and as District Superintendent oriented him to the many problems the Africans and Protestant populations in the city and in African villages faced. As district superintendent he was presented with opportunities to travel to the more rural areas of Angola, where there were many Methodist congregations.

In assessing the situation, Dodge quickly encountered and identified four primary problems that hindered the Methodist church's ability to be more effective in Angola: the inefficiency of the Methodist Church to train and start new churches; the priorities of the Portuguese colonial government, Roman Catholic discrimination, and lack of forthrightness of government officials in executing their duties.

African chiefs were sending envoys to Dodge with a request for pastors, evangelists, and teachers to start new churches and schools in their villages. However, finding adequate leadership was difficult as the church had done very little to train indigenous pastors to meet the growing need. There were simply not enough qualified persons to meet all of the requests.

Luanda district was part of the Angola Annual Conference. There was one bishop who supervised the work of the Methodist Church in four countries, namely, Angola, Belgian Congo (Zaire), Mozambique, and Zimbabwe which spoke three different colonial languages, English, French and Portuguese. These countries also formed the Africa Central Conference.¹⁶ In addition to the three colonial languages used in these five countries, there were also hundreds of indigenous languages spoken by the majority of the Africans. Coupled with transportation and communication challenges it was fairly difficult for the bishop to coordinate the work of the church from Congo where the bishop, Bishop Springer was stationed.

In many ways, Luanda was a district on its own for it was a very large district that was only accessible through an unreliable and underdeveloped Angolan road network in the 1930s, especially in the rural areas. For the District Superintendent to visit the rural churches, the journey could take almost a week, and sometimes two, just to get there. When Dodge had asked Rev. Klebsattel how large the district was, he was told, “A hundred and fifty miles in every direction and here in the city we have ten branches of the church.”¹⁷ Rev. Klebsattel had advised Dodge that on supervision visits to the rural churches “it’s our custom here to buy supplies and take along a cook when we do district work. Don’t try to visit the whole district at once; it will kill you. You should not be away from the city more than two weeks at any time and even then emergencies will develop during your absence.”¹⁸

On Dodge’s first visit to the rural churches in the district, he followed the advice of Rev. Klebsattel. It was going to be a ten day trip of visiting several churches and also exploring the new places from where requests had come asking for evangelists and

teachers. For Dodge these requests for pastors and teacher were an opportunity to grow the church. Dodge bought his own supplies, and along with his cook, he also invited Manuel Maria d'Ameida, a retired evangelist who lived in the city and who was familiar with the district. Rev. Klebsattel had left his Model A Ford for Dodge to use and the team set out for Cahondo village first, some one hundred miles from Luanda. The pastor and the church had been informed of the new District Superintendent's visit and prepared to welcome them. When Dodge arrived late in the afternoon, he found the whole village including the village headman waiting to receive him at the stick-and-mud church. The pastor greeted Dodge and introduced him to the crowd.

The pastor then took Manuel Maria d'Ameida aside behind a hut. After a while Manuel returned to Dodge and took him aside too, informing him that the members of the church had prepared a meal for him and everyone at the church. He was told that the church had also arranged for a house for him if he preferred to prepare his own meals. Dodge found himself in a dilemma. In such moments he had always relied on his wife to make a decision but this day it was different, Eunice was not there. "Then, without even Eunice to consult, I made a decision that colored our entire ministry. I replied, "Thank the pastor and his people. Of course, I'll be glad to accept their hospitality."¹⁹

Dodge sat down among the people of Cahondo, the pastor, and the village headman and ate the meal together. After the meal, Dodge led a charge conference, listening to the church's reports about the ministry of the church in Cahondo. From Cahondo, Dodge went to another village called Dondo and was welcomed similarly. Again and again, over the course of the ten day trip, Dodge visited ten separate villages, showing and welcoming hospitality to the chiefs, the churches, and the villages. This

would help set the tone for the kind of leadership Dodge would provide to the people of Angola as their District Superintendent.

Manuel Maria d'Ameida had been surprised and touched by Dodge's decision to accept the hospitality of the village and church. He had never witnessed any of the missionaries eat the food that the Africans had prepared. Furthermore, he had not witnessed any of them sitting with the African to eat together. D'Ameida later sent letters to some pastors in the district describing what had happened at Cahondo and the other churches. In their monthly "Africa Letter", a letter that the Dodges sent to friends, families and sponsors in the USA, they reported that Manuel Maria d'Ameida's letter said, "It has been fourteen years since we had received a new missionary. Let's bring this new missionary into our fellowship."²⁰ Dodge reported that from that experience he did not travel with a cook or food supplies on his following district visits. He trusted the people and he learned to eat cassava mush called "funji" and the people were also careful to try to meet their District Superintendent's hygienic standards by boiling his drinking water and sometimes finding cutlery for him to use.

In return the Dodges soon realized the ramifications of their new approach of identifying with the people and accepting their hospitality. The Dodges could not accept the hospitality of their pastors and churches in the villages without offering the same hospitality to the African pastors when they visited their district superintendent in the city.

The village headmen among the Dembo people continued to send requests for evangelists and teachers. As a result, Dodge decided to visit the villages in the Cambanda

region. Upon arriving in the region, Dodge learned that neither the Roman Catholics nor the Protestants had been to the region with the gospel. It was an un-evangelized region of Angola. The men and the women in this region still wore animal skin wraparound skirts. The Dembo people had resisted Portuguese household taxes and the government official had resorted to arresting the family heads or taking livestock as punishment for not paying taxes. Sadly, the animals that were reported being taken were worth much more than the taxes they were required to pay. In order to get the money for taxes, the village heads sent the young men to go to Luanda to work and after several months in the city they would bring the money home for taxes. When they returned home these young men would tell their elders of the life in the city. Among other stories, they narrated about going to a Methodist mission center where they heard the preaching of Dodge or Rev. Neto. These young men told their elders about the words they had heard preached and how this had changed their lives. Furthermore, the young men would share how they were taught to read and write at the Methodist mission center. The elders also noted the changes in the lives of the young people when they came back from the city. These young men were sharing the power of the gospel to their villages. As a result, the elders sent an envoy to Dodge requesting preachers and teachers for their villages. When Dodge listened to their stories, he agreed to their needs and committed to sending a pastor to the Dembo people.

Dodge had hit the ground running as fast as he could when he first arrived in Angola. The work was tiring and consuming. It required a lot of on-the-job learning and understanding, and he was learning about the great needs of the people. However, he

also saw the fruit of the labor beginning to bear from all of the hard work of the church.

In his monthly letter of July, 1937, Dodge writes:

Blisters, nail holes! Worn out socks! Those are the proofs that the Superintendent of the Luanda District has been on the march. Up in the mountains of the interior where no white missionary has ever before visited. What a thrill for both the black folks and the missionary. What proof that the Lord's work is advancing – when 232 people appeared out of the forests for worship service in a place where a native evangelist has been able to visit only occasionally since he organized a class there eighteen months ago.²¹

In the letter, Dodge acknowledges the work of Angolan evangelists who were reaching out to new places with the Gospel. He was beginning to see a model of discipleship through the planting of seeds of the church in Luanda. When the young men from the villages would come to Luanda and visited the Mission center first for night school, some of them would become Christians. Those who became members of the church were then trained in basic Bible lessons to become evangelists. When they returned to their villages they began to preach the gospel with much success. In recognizing their hard work, Dodge writes, “It is indeed convincing evidence that the Mission has accomplished something of value when boys and girls educated and trained religiously in the Mission Centers, can go out and organize such work.”²² Dodge would then be asked to visit these new congregations. In one district visit to the interior that lasted twelve days, Dodge reported 160 baptisms and 77 new members received in the church.²³

While Dodge experienced many examples of hope and revival, not all of the Methodist churches that Dodge visited were thriving. In some cases the evangelists would plant the church, and by the time Dodge visited, some of the churches were no longer there because of lack of pastors. In one place he found the preacher appointed to serve in prison. He wrote, “Don’t remind the D.S of that dark day of discouragement when he found one preacher in prison for his zeal, and the next church apparently dead. But the prisoner is remaining faithful.”²⁴

At his first District Conference as District Superintendent in 1937, Dodge made a few pastoral appointment changes without consulting Bishop Springer, whose offices were in Elizabethville in Belgian Congo. Dodge had visited every church in the district and he felt that the changes were necessary to strengthen the work of the Methodist Church. He knew that it would take months before the bishop would be able to reply and make the formal changes, and so he realized it was better to inform the bishop of the changes he made.

Of the two major changes made, the first was to remove himself as the pastor in charge at the Luanda mission center. In order to be more effective in the role as District Superintendent, he appointed his associate Rev. Agostinho Pedro Neto the pastor in charge of Hartzell Memorial Church. This was a very important appointment to make without consulting the bishop because most of the big churches on mission centers were assigned to white missionary pastors. However, Dodge felt the change to be necessary for the betterment of the church.

The second major change he made was to appoint two young pastors to the Dembo people. The two young pastors in their respective stations found many villagers who were ready to be baptized. The witnessing of the young men who had been converted in the city earning tax money had already made positive changes in the lives of the people. The pastors, who were not yet licensed to baptize people, began to send requests for Dodge to visit the churches to perform the baptisms.

Dodge eagerly responded to the invitations and made his second visit to the Dembo people. His visit was well announced in the villages such that when Dodge arrived he was surprised by the crowds that were waiting to hear him preach and to be baptized. Dodge wrote, “Altars were set up in the open as the unordained pastors presented new converts for baptism.”²⁵

For the first time Dodge was forced to address the issue of polygamy, a tradition and practice in Africa that goes back thousands of years, but was incompatible with the teachings of Methodism. As Dodge was baptizing the people, Chief Cambanda came forward to kneel before Dodge to be baptized. The local pastor came forward and asked the chief to leave, in which the chief refused to do until he was baptized like the rest of his subjects. Then an argument ensued between the pastor and the chief. Dodge then joined in on the discussion:

“He wants to be baptized,” said the pastor, “but he can’t. He has several wives. We can’t baptize polygamists.” But the old chief was adamant and was sincere that he wanted to be baptized. I knelt in front of him and through the young pastor as interpreter explained, “You are not ready for baptism. You have more than one woman, don’t you? Yes, but I need them to make gardens for all the guest,” he explained through the interpreter. “You are not ready for baptism. Not today – perhaps next

year,” I tried to encourage him. The chief rose, disappointed, and went back and sat on the ground. My heart went out for him. Who was I to deny him baptism when I should know the mysterious and wonderful work of the Holy Spirit? In the midst of rejoicing at the response of the youth, my heart ached for an older generation caught in the traditions of the past.²⁶

Dodge would have preferred to baptize the chief but he also wanted to protect his local pastor who had made the decision for the chief not to be baptized. Dodge stayed among the Dembo people for ten days and during his visit he recorded that the spirit of evangelism was burning deep and wide like a veld fire in dry grass.²⁷ He also noticed that the young pastors were constantly in conflict with the chiefs and village headmen. In reality, the chiefs were being more respectful to him than to the young pastors and so Dodge recognized the need for a more mature pastor to be appointed to the Dembo people in order to bring balance. He made up his mind that at the next District Conference he would move Rev. Neto from Luanda to the Dembos, “irrespective of what Bishop Springer might say.”²⁸

By the time of the District Conference of 1938, and after having already consulted the bishop, Dodge appointed Rev. Neto to the Dembos to reinforce the work of the two young pastors. Rev. Neto was stationed in a village called Piri. It was not an easy appointment to make given the Rev. Neto’s family’s needs but the “privilege of evangelizing the Dembos was primary.”²⁹ He left the appointment at Luanda mission open because Rev. Klebsattel was set to return from his furlough. Dodge had personally seen and testified to the need among the Dembos. He remained confident that Rev. Neto had both the maturity and experience to work with the chiefs and village headmen there. Dodge writes:

Suppose you had been the official pastor of the largest church in the conference for seven years, after having served in smaller churches since 1922. Suppose your District Superintendent moved you to a region where there had never before been a church and told you to build your house, gather together your own congregation, and construct a building in which to worship. Suppose you, with a family of eight, left an assured salary of \$20.00 a month for an indefinite reimbursement. How would you react? That's what we did with Agostinho Pedro Neto, who had been native pastor of our huge Luanda church.”³⁰

At this point, the many pastoral changes Dodge had made after assessing the needs of the churches he had visited throughout the district were complete. The church he had reported earlier that had died had a new “livewire pastor” and showed signs of life once again.³¹ The decision to appoint Rev. Neto to the Dembo people had been a good one after all. A few months in the appointment, Rev. Neto wrote Dodge a letter stating, “It invades me in the soul a certain pride of finding myself among a people who never before were evangelized. I would die for the Dembos. They are a humble and good people and desirous of receiving the Gospel. I want to be able to present myself to Jesus at the end of my existence with the Dembos at my side.”³²

When the Klebsattels finally returned from their furlough in 1938, Dodge took Rev. Klebsattel to the Dembos for him to see all of the new churches planted there. Records showed “2,611 adults received into preparatory membership, 879 adults baptized

and received into full membership, 794 children baptized, 12,104 Sunday School pupils and 14 new stations opened.”³³

The pastoral changes were still not enough to sufficiently meet the growing demand for clergy. The only viable solution was to either recruit more American missionaries or train more Angolans at the Bible School at Quessua. An impediment to training more pastors in Angola was the Portuguese colonial education policy.

When Dodge arrived in Luanda he saw firsthand the Portuguese government’s negative attitude towards the Africans. The government aimed to limit education advancement of most Angolans. There was demand for education however there existed few schools due in part to the Portuguese government’s agreement with the Vatican that “all African education in Portuguese colonies should be committed to the Roman Catholic Church.”³⁴ With the infamous Berlin Conference treaty of 1885, which Portugal signed, Protestants were granted permission to evangelize in Africa. However, while the Portuguese reluctantly permitted Protestants to evangelize in its colonies, they remained hostile to Protestant education initiatives.

Protestant missions routinely found it difficult to obtain permission for the building of schools. A typical colonial government response was one that read, “Leave education to us.”³⁵ Yet the demand for schools increased, while the demand for qualified Angolans to teach was even greater. Education was almost exclusively a Roman Catholic initiative. The partnership between The Roman Catholic Church in agreement and the colonial Portuguese government aimed to promote and protect Portuguese political and economic interests. Dodge writes:

The Portuguese officials were not eager to have the *pretos* (blacks) learn. The plantation owners wanted subservient workers and put pressure on the local officials to limit the number of schools; then, too there was the constant pressure from the Roman Catholic hierarchy.³⁶

Because obtaining permits to build and start schools was such a difficult process, the Methodist mission in Luanda was only officially permitted to run a primary school. Yet, the requests and demands from the rural areas were always about the need for churches and schools. Because it was easier to establish and register a church instead of securing a permit to build a school, at the Luanda mission center, Dodge began to consider an alternative way to circumvent the system.

By starting a night school program for working people, the school did not require a permit from the government. As word spread among the throngs of eager students, the response was overwhelming. Dodge writes, “We had to limit the evening classes as young men, most of them from the country, flocked to the mission at the close of a long day on the docks, in stores, or from domestic work. Tired as they were, they were eager to study, even in the flickering light of a carbide lamp.”³⁷ At its height, the night school program had one hundred and fifty students (who were reported) who were pressed together on “five twelve-foot and eight six-foot benches.”³⁸ As was the problem for most of the schools that catered to the Angolan population, the availability of teachers was an ongoing problem for the Luanda mission. Teachers worked long hours, often in serving both the day school primary students and the night school secondary students.

As Dodge considered the growing rift between the Portuguese colonial government's reluctance to issue permits for schools and the population's growing demand for education, he recognized that more would need to be done. And while he could offer night school at the urban Luanda mission center, to do so in the more rural areas where the Methodists were building more churches was not a feasible option.

As a result, Dodge formulated a strategy that would help the problem of education in the rural villages. For one thing, it was easier to obtain a permit for building a new school if that school was registered in the name of an individual instead of the name of a Protestant mission. Thus, while supported by the Methodist Church, Dodge aimed to find qualified African teachers who could register new schools in their own name. Dodge wrote, "So, whenever we could find a qualified African teacher able and willing to be responsible, we registered schools in his name. Each knew he would be supervised by the mission."³⁹ The success of Dodge's strategy allowed the Methodist church to build schools in the other districts where the church had previously been denied necessary permits.

Family life in Angola

At this point it is important to consider home life at the Luanda mission center. With Ralph running the district and Eunice running the primary school and directing the women's work, the Dodges needed help for the upkeep of the yard, cleaning of the house, cooking meals and taking care of the young Ed. Jr. As a result, Dodge and Eunice agreed to hire two servants, Antonio and Maria Julia. Antonio performed several duties ranging

from cleaning the yard, working in the garden, setting the table, serving meals and washing dishes. Maria's duties included cleaning the house, spreading the beds, cooking, and babysitting Ed. Jr. On one occasion, when Antonio came to work limping, Dodge noticed the limp and asked him about it. When Antonio informed him that he had stepped on a nail, Dodge inspected the man's leg. As he examined the wound, Dodge also noticed ulcer on the calf of Antonio's leg. Recognizing the severity of the situation, Dodge immediately took Antonio to a doctor in the city for a tetanus shot.

Having the extra help at home allowed Ralph and Eunice to focus on their duties. It also was helpful in May 1937, when Eunice woke up one morning vomiting. Life was about to change for the Dodges once again as Eunice came back to the bedroom to tell Dodge the news that she was pregnant with their second child.

From the time Dodge arrived in Angola he seemed to be the only member of the family whose blood was a favorite for the anopheles mosquito. Considering that he was always traveling to the rural areas, crossing swamps and rivers, Dodge was more susceptible to malaria and surely he often had bouts of malaria fevers. He often joked that antimalarial tablets with breakfast was as much a routine as prayers afterward. The doctor had recommended him three tablets of quinine a day whenever he had malaria. Right before Christmas of 1937, he was attacked by malaria. His temperature rose to 103 degrees Fahrenheit and he was constantly vomiting and shivering. Eunice covered him with more blankets causing him to sweat. The malaria exhausted Dodge. Even when Eunice suggested that he doubled the dose of quinine, it never seemed to help.

At the same time their son Ed. Jr. was not feeling well. He was always calling for water to drink. They gave him fruit juice or water and he cried for more. He never seemed to have his thirst quenched. Eunice gave him more medicine they were given as antimalarial for children. Ed grew listless always wanting to be carried. He struggled to walk and began to lose weight. To make matters worse, Eunice was in the third trimester of pregnancy and worn out from caring for Ralph Dodge and then Ed. Jr.

The family came to rely on the missionary doctor who was stationed at Quessua for treatment. Not only did the doctor treat them without charge, but they trusted the fact that he was American. As Dodge's condition deteriorated, Eunice called Dr. Levi, a Portuguese doctor to come and attend to Dodge. When he took Dodge's temperature it was 104 degrees. He recommended that Dodge take fifteen tablets of quinine. From that day on, each time Dodge would come down with malaria, he treated it with a high dose of quinine.

When Eunice told the doctor about Ed's condition, the doctor inspected the medication that the Dodges were giving their son for antimalarial medicine called calomel. Only upon closer examination, Doctor Levi realized they had been giving their son the wrong medicine for the past three months. When Dr. Kemp, the missionary doctor finally arrived, and was told the story, Eunice reported to the surprise of everyone in the "Africa Letter" that "Dr. Kemp insisted that it would be impossible for a child to take calomel every day for three months and still live."

Towards the end of January of 1938, Eunice and Ed. Jr. took a train to Malange, to the Methodist mission center where Dr. Kemp was stationed and for six weeks she

stayed with the Kemp family waiting to deliver her baby. On February 28th, 1938, Eunice gave birth to their second child, a girl. They named her Lois Ann.



1938 Family Picture: Ralph and Eunice Dodge with their children Ed and Lois at Luanda Mission.

Assignment to Quessua and first furlough

Rev. Klebsattel's return to Angola from furlough abroad brought about the Dodges being moved to Quessua, the original destination from their assignment by the Board of Missions. Quessua mission station owned 8,900 acres of land with vibrant agriculture and medical ministries. The students at Quessua paid their school fees by working on the mission farm and gardens. At the Quessua mission center, Dodge had three primary tasks: dean of the William Taylor Bible School, pastor of the church, and

District Superintendent of the North Quanza District. Eunice, with two young children to care for, decided not to undertake an assignment at the mission center.

Since the family's arrival in Angola in December 1936, both Ralph and Eunice had become more proficient in Portuguese. By the time of annual conference in 1938, Ralph would interpret for Bishop Springer. While their time in Luanda had helped them learn Portuguese, by the time they arrived at Quessua, they enrolled in school in order to learn Kimbundu.

Geographically, the North Quanza District was a much larger district than the Luanda District. The area included Pungo Andongo, the place where the famous missionary and explorer David Livingstone, in 1855, spent time rewriting his journal that was lost at sea. The first Methodist missionaries to this area, under Bishop William Taylor, established a mission station here in 1885 at the village of Quiongua. Years later, the mission station moved to Quessua. Visiting the abandoned mission station of Quiongua, Dodge writes, "The missionary presence was everywhere in the form of gravestones marking the resting places of the early pioneers, including the two sisters of Mr. Withey."⁴⁰

The district also included Malange, where Dr. Kemp was stationed and where Eunice had given birth to their second child. It was also where the Portuguese colonial government had forced locals to live alongside the roads in order to make it easier for government officials to collect taxes and control the population. Successes in Malange by the Methodist Church were due in large part to schools the church had earlier founded. It was also here that there was significant influence of the Roman Catholic Church. In

addition to schools of its own, Dodge notes that in each one of its villages was a Roman Catholic Church. These churches were distinct because of the crosses that were placed atop each church. On the other hand, Protestant churches were not permitted to put up crosses on top of their buildings.

As was true in Luanda, Dodge was active in visiting the churches of his district. For most of his visits, Dodge would stay with the pastor-in-charge's family. While many of his visits were routine and occurred without much concern or problems, others became quite memorable for Dodge. On one trip to Hombo-Anjinji, where he was hosted by Rev. and Mrs. Santos da Costa, he found himself in an uncomfortable predicament. On his way to Hombo –Anjinji, Dodge became lost during the night. He found himself on an abandoned road that led to a river, where he in turn, had difficulty turning around. Dodge described it as a place where “the mosquitos were omnivorous.”⁴¹ When he finally arrived at his destination later in the evening he realized he had received more mosquito bites than any other time in Angola.

On a visit to another village, he became lost and ended up in a village called Lucala where he was able to stay the night with a Roman Catholic priest from Italy. As a result of this ecumenical encounter, Dodge writes, “foreignness was common bond, unfortunately stronger than the Gospel we preached.”⁴² On his way back to Quessua following his two week trip, he made a point to stop and thank the Roman Catholic priest. However, he was shocked to learn that the priest had died a week earlier from a severe form of malaria referred to as blackwater fever.

Upon returning home to his family back in Quessua, the Dodges decided to go to the Kemps' home to listen to evening news because Dr. and Mrs. Kemp was the only family at the mission center with a radio, missionaries would eagerly gather in the Kemps' home in the evenings to listen to the world news.

While Ralph was at the Kemps, he began to have a terrible headache. Ralph and Eunice decided it was better for them to go home and rest. Later that evening, Ralph started to vomit. Furthermore, his temperature reached the dangerous level of 104°. When he changed into his pajamas and used the bedchamber he noticed something even more troubling, dark urine. Like the priest who had died of blackwater fever⁴³, Dodge knew the dangers of severe malaria. He and Eunice quickly called upon Dr. Kemp.

That evening, Dr. Kemp as well as another missionary who served as a nurse stayed by Dodge's bedside all night, giving him a full glass of lemonade or water every fifteen minutes. "We must keep those kidneys working at top speed. If not they will get clogged," Miss Cross, the nurse demanded. Little Ed Jr. was in the room seeing the gloomy faces of everyone who was in the room and he heard Miss Cross telling his father, "Your life depends on this. You will have to drink this water."⁴⁴ The urine got darker and darker as the night wore on and the full glasses of lemonade and water kept coming with Eunice making more lemonade throughout the night. The plan and careful attention by Dr. Kemp, the nurse and Eunice was a success. By the next morning, Ralph's urine had lightened and Dr. Kemp assured him that the worst was almost over. However there was nothing assuring when Dr. Kemp turned to Ralph saying, "You are the second case I have treated blackwater fever. The first one died."⁴⁵

Dodge survived the blackwater fever and attributed the great care he had received from Dr. Kemp, Miss Cross and his wife as what saved his life. He also recognized that because there was no one to help the priest who had opened his doors to him, the man had died a very painful death.

With one of the unfortunate side effects of malaria being relapse, Dodge continually found himself suffering from the disease. As a result, Dr. Kemp suggested Dodge try a new antimalarial drug called Atabrine. However, Dodge's body did not react well to the drug. The medicine affected his nervous system, often causing a nervous breakdown. An insignificant noise might irritate him, so much so that Eunice often had to keep the children from him. The medicine caused him to withdraw, leading him to refuse visitors, even Dr. Kemp. At its worse, the condition caused Dodge to miss to church and mission meetings.

One place where Dodge was able to find some solace was his garden. He had always loved farming. Having been reared on a farm, it had almost become his career. When he was at the Luanda Mission, Dodge had kept a garden where he grew vegetables for the family and some of his neighbors. Likewise, when he moved to Quessua, he established a garden by the river that flowed through the mission station. It was his garden that provided him hope as he worked in it most evenings. He stated, "For me nothing is therapeutic as getting my hands in the soil."⁴⁶

But even the garden had its dangers. When on one day his son, Ed Jr., was working with him in the garden, he accidentally stepped on a colony of marching army ants. In no time at all, the ants swarmed over his body causing him to scream. Ralph

Dodge rushed over to Ed, picked him up and placed him on his shoulders, and rushed him to the river. Ralph dunked his son in the water, which in turn washed away the ants. Ed Jr would grow to remember this incident and always seeing his father as a hero for saving him from the army of ants.⁴⁷

While the garden could be a place of peace for Dodge, it did not quell the sickness and stress from the effects of the anti-malarial drug as well as the strain of missionary work. In time, Dodge began suffering from bouts of intermittent depression. Seeing his deteriorating health and social condition, the Quessua mission station committee made a decision to recommend Ralph and Eunice for their first furlough since they had arrived in Angola. On December 5th, 1940, Dr. Kemp wrote a letter to Dr. Donohugh who was the Executive Secretary in New York stating,

We missionaries at Quessua recently got together to try to determine something definite about furloughs. It was decided that the Dodges should go home in 1941. Brother Dodge has had a nervous symptoms mostly likely attributed to his taking atabrine instead of quinine. He is improving steadily, but still cannot stand any strain. He has carried a tremendous load ever since he arrived in Angola in 1936, having been stationed in Luanda for nearly two years just after his arrival here, with not only the Luanda station and district to oversee but also the usual responsibility of treating government matters for many missions all over Angola, and since being in Quessua he has been the Secretary of the Alliance of all missions working here. I could not but feel that I would rather take care of the Edlings this coming year here than the Dodges, so I voted for the Dodges to go home in 1941.⁴⁸

The Board of Missions approved the furlough as recommended by the Quessua mission committee. On the 5th of January of 1941 the Dodges left on a freighter out of Luanda, stopping first on the Congo River at Matadi, and then other ports along the west

coast until reaching Monrovia, Liberia. In Monrovia, the Dodges received new passports, since theirs had long expired and there was no American consular office in Angola.

Since Europe was already engulfed in the Second World War, Dodge stated that “sometimes warships would circle around us, inspecting; we had lifeboat drill at least once a week. Finally leaving Sierra Leon, we struck a straight line to New York.”⁴⁹ The Dodges arrived in New York City on the 25th of February of 1941 after a voyage that lasted seven weeks.

Five years had passed since the Dodges first left the United States on May 2, 1936. When Ralph went to Angola as a missionary, he was twenty-nine years old, now he was returning on a furlough at the age of thirty-four. He had gone to Angola as a missionary under the Methodist Episcopal Church and now he was returning as a Methodist Church missionary after The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Protestant Church and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South had merged in April 1939 to become The Methodist Church. The letter from his colleague and family physician, Dr. Kemp to the Executive Secretary recommending a furlough for Dodge said it all – he needed to rest. Back in the United States, Dodge was able to find much needed rest from five tireless, but life changing years in Angola.

Notes

¹ Lawrence W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola: A River of Many Currents* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1992), 47.

² Antonio de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970) was Portugal's Prime Minister from 1932-1968. In order to reverse Portugal's budget deficits and creating surpluses, Salazar insisted on maintaining Portugal's colonies which included Angola and Mozambique. Angola and Mozambique were therefore critical for Salazar's economic policies in Portugal.

³ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop* (Tucson: Wheatmark, 1986), 28.

⁴ Eunice Dodge to Dr. Thomas S. Donohugh, 3 December, 1937.

⁵ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 34.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Tremayne J. Copplestone, *History of Methodist Missions Vol. 4: Twentieth-Century Perspectives (The Methodist Episcopal Church, 1896-1939)* (New York: The Board of Global Ministries, 1973), 937.

⁸ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 38.

⁹ Ibid., 39.

¹⁰ Ibid., 43.

¹¹ Ralph E. Diffendorfer, Paul Hutchinson, eds., *The World Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Chicago: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), 114.

¹² Barbara H. Lewis, *Methodist Overseas Missions, 1953* (New York City: Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, 1953), 7.

¹³ Henderson, *The Church in Angola: A River of Many Currents*, 18.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 41.

¹⁶ Outside the United States of America, United Methodist Annual Conferences form regional bodies called Central Conferences to connect the ministries of the annual conferences. By the time Dodge arrived in Angola as a missionary there were two Central Conferences in Africa, the West Africa Central Conference and Africa Central Africa. Today there are three Central Conferences which include the Congo Central Conference. Inside the USA, these regional bodies are called Jurisdictions and there are five Jurisdictions in the USA. See *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012), paragraph 10, page 25.

¹⁷ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 31.

¹⁸ Ibid., 39.

¹⁹ Ibid., 47.

²⁰ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, "Africa Letter," 7 July, 1937.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 56.

²⁶ Ralph Dodge, "The Church and Culture," an essay, January, 1962.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 56.

³⁰ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, "Africa Letter," 10 June, 1938

³¹ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, "Africa Letter," 7 July, 1937.

³² Ibid.

³³ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, "Africa Letter," 27 August, 1938.

³⁴ Dodge, *Revolutionary Bishop*, 55.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, Africa Letter, 7 July, 1937.

³⁸ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, "Africa Letter," 7 July, 1937.

³⁹ Dodge, *Revolutionary Bishop*, 57.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 59.

⁴¹ Ibid., 60.

⁴² Ibid., 61.

⁴³ Blackwater fever happens when the blood stream becomes full of malaria germs. The malaria germs attack and destroy up to eighty percent of the red blood cells which would have to be expelled from the body through the kidneys. The dark urine is caused by the overworking of the kidneys

⁴⁴ Interview with Edward Dodge Jr. Personal Interview. Mutare, May 14, 2014.

⁴⁵ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 61.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 62.

⁴⁷ Interview with Edward Dodge Jr. Personal Interview. May 14, 2014.

⁴⁸ Dr. Kemp to Dr. Donohugh, letter, 5 December, 1940.

⁴⁹ Dodge. *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 63.

CHAPTER THREE

RALPH DODGE AS FOREIGN DIVISION SECRETARY AND BISHOP

World War II and back to school

For Ralph, Eunice and the children, a return to the United States contributed to them having mixed emotions. While the family was excited to be home, to meet family and friends and to take the rest they needed from the hectic missionary activities in Angola, the Dodges were forced to grapple with a new kind of culture shock.

The difference between living a normal life in Angola and in the United States was a striking one. Everywhere the family went, what might seem meaningless before the family's journey to Africa, now had a new perspective. It became much more apparent how wasteful normal life in America could be. For example, in Angola, tin cans were cherished as drinking mugs or made into some utensils. Furthermore, in Angola, the thought of throwing away food was unheard of, as the Dodges had always shared excess food with students or neighbors. Back in America, the Dodges were now confronted with the idea of excess food going to waste.

Nevertheless, the Dodges were pleased to be home for many reasons. While furloughs allowed the missionary to rest from the mission field, they also provided opportunities to acquaint children with an understanding of their own culture as well as extended family and relatives. For the Dodges, the furlough allowed their own parents the opportunity to meet and spend time with Ralph Edward Jr. and Lois Ann for the first time.

However the furlough was not all about resting and family time. For the missionary, it was critical that they communicate their progress, needs, and desires with supporters of the mission. The Dodges quickly set to scheduling meetings and speaking engagements with churches and benefactors where they could better testify to their important work in Angola.

Moreover, the Dodges would also take advantage of precious time at home to receive advanced training. Ralph and Eunice enrolled at the Kennedy School of Missions at Hartford Seminary. Eunice was admitted for a master's degree in Christian Education and Ralph for a master's degree in Theology. Along with the credits they had accumulated during their orientation before their journey to Africa, the Dodges aimed to complete their degrees during the yearlong furlough.

Everything was going as planned for the family until a Sunday afternoon on December 7, 1941, when the radio announced the Japanese attack on the American military naval base of Pearl Harbor, a day in which President Franklin D. Roosevelt remarked would "live in infamy." With the United States now at war with the Japanese, and Nazi Germany's subsequent declaration of war four days later, the Dodges were informed that they would not be able to return to Angola for the duration of the war as the United States government had deemed it dangerous for children to travel on the oceans.

As Dodge settled into coursework at Hartford Seminary, he was able to secure an appointment in the New England Conference of the Methodist Church. He was appointed to a small congregation in Springfield, Massachusetts, about thirty-five minutes' drive

from the seminary. The Board of Missions supplemented his salary while the congregation supplied a fairly large parsonage.

By May 1942, as Ralph and Eunice prepared for graduation at Hartford, Eunice shared the news that she was once again with child. Following graduation, Eunice took time off to rest and prepare for the new addition to the family as Dodge decided to enroll in the Ph.D program at Hartford. Six months later, on November 12, 1942 Eunice gave birth to the couple's third child, a boy named Clifford Russell.

At Hartford, the PhD program kept Ralph consumed with coursework and research. In addition to writing, researching and defending a dissertation, Ralph was required to complete thirty hours of graduate level coursework. His dissertation, entitled *A Program of Anthropological Research for Missionaries Working Among the Bantu Speaking Peoples of Central and Southern Africa* was framed by his experiences in ministry in Angola.

Dodge's training at Hartford introduced him to new missionary practices that emphasized collaboration and partnership with the indigenous people through the training of local leaders. While older models of mission tended to rely heavily on the missionary to plan, implement and evaluate the project, Dodge had seen firsthand the challenges of such a model in Angola. Thus, he was "deeply motivated by the new mission philosophy that in order to be effective, the missionary should quickly train indigenous people to do the work to which he or she had been assigned, and then move on to some other job."¹

In the footsteps of Bishop William Taylor

When Dodge first arrived in Angola he stepped in a mission field which was started in 1885 by Bishop William Taylor, whose philosophy and vision for mission was one that focused on the creation of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches.² Before he was elected bishop, Taylor volunteered his services to the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church to be a missionary to Africa on condition that he could recruit his own missionaries independently from the board. However, he wanted the Board of Missions to pay the travel costs and an initial amount to support the missionaries for a short period in the beginning of their appointment in order to help them to settle.³ When the board refused his request, Taylor formed the Transit Fund to help with the travelling costs for missionaries in foreign fields.

Later on, when Taylor was elected bishop and assigned as a missionary bishop to Africa at the Philadelphia meeting of The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1884, his organization evolved into the Transit and Building Fund Society of Bishop William Taylor's Self-Supporting Missions. His assignment in Africa had two objectives; to administer the organized Methodist work in Liberia⁴ and to start other Methodist missions anywhere in Africa in line with his self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating plan.

Upon his arrival in Luanda, Angola on May 20th, 1885 Bishop Taylor revealed a further objective. Diffendorfer states that when Bishop Taylor landed in Luanda,

He saw the same Islamic menace that immediately strikes every Christian observer who visits the continent. By every caravan route Moslem traders and slave dealers were pressing from North Africa to the conquest of the pagan jungle. Ten converts were being won to the prophet of Mecca for every one that was being brought into the Christian fold.⁵

Bishop Taylor wanted to slow down the spread of Islam further south by planting “a chain of mission stations” across Africa from the west to southeast.⁶ It was Bishop Taylor’s goal to establish mission stations stretching from Luanda in Angola on the Atlantic to Inhambane in Mozambique on the Pacific. Therefore, on May 24, 1885, Bishop Taylor and his team gathered for worship on a land they had bought in Luanda which became the first mission station he founded in Africa.

Within six months, Taylor opened six more mission stations. The second of which was founded at Dondo where he aimed to set up a printing press and mechanic shop. The missionaries assigned to this station were able to attract many people by playing an organ, the first the locals had ever seen and heard. However, within a few weeks of moving to Dondo, two members of the team died due to malaria.

The third mission station established was at Nhangué-a-Pepe, approximately fifty miles from Dondo. The station was successful at establishing a primary school. It was also here that Taylor planned to build a tanning factory and trading house as a means to support the missionaries.

Three other mission stations were additionally established at places called Pungo-Andongo (approximately forty miles from Nhangué-a-Pepe where an industrial school

was established), Malanje (approximately sixty miles from Pungo-Andongo), as well as at Quessua (located two hundred and eighty miles northeast of Luanda and eight miles from Malanje where a Bible School was established, which would become the Taylor Bible School, as a means to train indigenous people to become pastors). Quessua was the major Methodist center in Angola with a boarding school for boys and girls, a hospital and nurse training school, Bible school, and an agricultural training school.

With the success of the implementation of the first six mission stations in Angola, Bishop Taylor set out to impact other countries throughout Africa. He initially turned his attention to the Congo, after having personally met with Belgian King Leopold II, in Brussels, to establish another chain of mission stations. By 1890 Bishop Taylor sent a missionary named Rev. Erwin Richards to Mozambique who in turn established a new station at Inhambane. It was planned that this new station in Mozambique would serve as a base for more mission stations in the areas south of the Zambezi River.

In 1896, after having served twelve years as the missionary bishop of Africa, Taylor retired. His lofty goal of establishing self-supporting missions in Africa had become only partially realized. While there were many new mission stations established under his leadership, the African economy had not been sufficient enough to sustain them as self-supporting entities. Thus, they had abandoned such objective in favor of more traditional means of support through direct sponsorships and benevolence, specifically through the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. From the records available, in 1925, six years before Dodge arrived in Angola, the Board of Missions budgeted \$109, 820.00 for the operations of the church in Angola alone.⁷ While many of the mission stations in Angola, Congo and Mozambique were able to

receive the necessary sponsorships to continue their work some of them struggled to preserve. Taylor's successor, Bishop Joseph Crane Hartzell had to abandon the Dondo and Nhangué-a-Pepe stations, but not because of financial failure,⁸ but because the missionaries Taylor had placed at these two stations had died of malaria and he was unable to find suitable replacements. By the time Bishop Hartzell arrived in Angola in 1896, he found only "thirty-six church members, hardly more than the double the number of missionaries"⁹ scattered among the six mission stations Taylor established twelve years earlier. Nonetheless, the churches there remained resilient and persevered. Many of the congregations would survive the test of time.

It is important to consider how Ralph Dodge's missionary journey intersected with Taylor in a number of ways. By the time Dodge arrived in Luanda, Angola in December of 1936 he was assigned to Taylor's very first church plant of May 24, 1885. The house that the Dodges first stayed in Luanda had been the same house Bishop Taylor built at the mission station. Furthermore, Dodge attended Taylor University in Indiana, named for Taylor himself.

In Angola, Bishop Taylor was known by the indigenous people as "The Flaming Torch" or the "Fire Stick."¹⁰ He would go on to write a book with the title *The Flaming Torch in Darkest Africa*. Like David Livingstone, whom he described as a "God-chosen man with the pluck, the power, and knowledge to be pioneer of Africa's redemption"¹¹, Taylor believed the key to success for the pioneer missionary was not "the conversion of a few souls, however valuable these maybe," but to spread a general knowledge of Christianity, civilization and commerce among the "naked barbarous heathens in darkest

Africa.”¹² He left a legacy that would continue to bear influence in the missionary practices in Angola during Dodge’s time.

Moreover, by the time of Dodge’s arrival in 1936, a few missionaries who had come to Angola by invitation of Bishop Taylor were still living there. Furthermore, all of the mission stations in Angola that remained had been founded by Bishop Taylor as there had been no other endeavors in the time between Bishop Taylor’s departure in 1896 and Dodge’s arrival in 1936 to start new mission stations.

Partnership and collaboration in missions

Having taken the history of Angola missions into account, it was through Dodge’s doctoral dissertation that he recognized, outlined and proposed important changes to the mission field. Drawing on his nearly five years of practical missionary work in Angola as pastor, district superintendent, church planter, and teacher, Dodge’s work promoted missionary attitudes and practices that placed emphasis on partnership or collaboration with the indigenous people. He wrote, “If there is one thing the young missionary must guard against it is an attitude of superiority toward those native to the field where he has been sent.”¹³

In Dodge’s view, collaboration and partnership with the Africans meant to understand, treat and relate with them as mature people and equals. The goal of collaboration in missionary practices was for the Africans to “belong, to be acknowledged and accepted as mature members”¹⁴ in their church and in society. Dodge confirmed this when he later writes, “I believe that all men are brothers, having come

from a common stock and permitted a common destiny. There is a diversity of gifts, I do not deny; but the quality and quantity of those gifts are not based on race, nationality, or social status.”¹⁵

Dodge’s egalitarian approach to missions was also concerned with semantics. As an anthropologist he also saw the need to change the language with which some pioneer missionaries had often used to describe Africans. In 1938, Denys Shropshire, an Anglican missionary in Zimbabwe at the same time Dodge was in Angola wrote a book called *The Church and Primitive Peoples: The Religious Institutions and Beliefs of the Southern Bantu and their Bearing on the Problems of Christian Missionary* in which he described the Bantu people as “primitive, technically barbaric and at pre-literary stage of sociological and cultural development.”¹⁶ Even in the early 1920s, Dodge’s own church was still using some derogatory language to describe some Africans. For example, The Methodist Episcopal Church’s committee on Conversation and Advance’s 1923 widely circulated book, *The World Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church* states,

The circumstances with which the missionary must deal in Angola do not differ materially from those in Congo, Rhodesia or Portuguese East Africa. There is first of all, the problem of *savagery*. It is the same problem that has faced every missionary since Robert Moffatt. There are, including the Bantus, about 120,000,000 Negroes in Africa, most of whom still live in a condition of primitive savageness. The primitive Negro, as has been stated has never founded a stone city, nor built a ship, nor built a literature, nor suggested a creed... The whole life of Africa is scourged by ignorance and disease. The one naturally leads to the other.¹⁷

Dodge believed that the very heart of missionary principles and how missionaries identified their mission field needed to move away from a dictatorial approach to one of cooperation and collaboration with the Africans and especially the indigenous leaders. As

a missionary, Dodge saw his role not as a ‘great white savior’ but as that of a colleague of the indigenous people. For him such cooperation and collaboration entailed the training of indigenous leaders so that they would buy into the projects and ministries mission. For Dodge, this idea of cooperation and collaboration went beyond what was merely best for the mission to flourish, but it was the core nature of Christianity itself. He writes, “Christianity is supposed to be a fellowship – but there can be no fellowship without sharing, identifying with, and relating to all of the other members.”¹⁸

While the missionary’s training and theological education might set him apart from the indigenous leader, Dodge believed it was ultimately the responsibility of the missionary to create a brotherhood among the people themselves.¹⁹ In order for this to be accomplished, the missionary needed to be careful not to patronize or demean a fellow brother or sister in Christ because of one’s advanced education or degree.

Dodge and the Social Gospel

From his days at Boston University, Dodge embraced the works of Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) whom he referred to as the social prophet of America. Rauschenbusch’s teaching on the social gospel was emphasized at Boston University and it was the reason Dodge chose to go to Boston University after studying at Taylor University. He writes, “I realized the conservative theological position at Taylor with its emphasis upon personal salvation differed from the more liberal theology at Boston. I wanted to know the Scriptural and theological basis for the strong emphasis upon the social application of the Gospel following the Walter Rauschenbusch tradition”²⁰

The social gospel as taught by Rauschenbush influenced Dodge in such a way that when he went to Angola and saw the social and political environment and how the Africans were evangelized, Dodge saw the need to change the gospel emphasis from that of the individual out of his environment in favor of a future paradise to that of altering the environment along with the individual.²¹ He argued that there was no change of the Gospel but only of emphasis, “The social gospel is the old message of salvation, but enlarged and intensified.”²²

For Dodge the social gospel had a dual effect, to transform the social environment as well as to regenerate the individual. In other words, the social gospel was appealing to Dodge because he saw it as holistic. In Angola he had witnessed missionaries being sympathetic to the needs of their parishioners, stressing upon salvation from the life’s perils, but he also noted that very little attention was given to the temporal conditions which surrounded them. As a result, he writes “The most degrading environment could be endured if certainty of eternal paradise were assured. The social gospel is directly or indirectly responsible for the greater emphasis being placed upon the worth of the individual as an agent of the divine. God works through human instrumentality, not only in the proclaiming of the word but also in creating a society in harmony with the Christian ideal.”²³

Dodge’s social gospel approach to missions and evangelism became the cornerstone of how mission was conducted under his leadership. He accepted that while pioneer missionaries “were impressed with the horror that men should die without Christ. We share that horror; we are impressed also with the horror that men should live without

Christ.” Therefore, for a missionary to be successful in evangelism, “the individual and his environment must ever be immanent in his/her thinking.”²⁴

In Angola, Dodge understood that for some time it was axiomatic among his predecessors that the goal of missions was the creation of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches. By the time he arrived in Angola, some of these goals such as self-governing and self-supporting had not yet materialized. The Board of Missions based in New York was basically governing the church in Angola and was financially supporting most of the church’s ministries. On the aspect of self-propagating, Dodge had noticed that in the villages where people had closely woven social patterns and strong sense of solidarity, mass conversions were common. He witnessed villages in the Dembo region coming to Christ with the leading or permission of their chiefs. In villages where an individual was ready to accept Christianity and the rest was not yet ready, Dodge proposed that it was “better to wait until the entire people group is ready to accept Christianity rather than tear individuals from the ties which securely bind them to their clan or tribe,” insisting that rather than make them “renegades or apostates by an early baptism against the wish of their group, it is better to leave the individual in his group until such a time as they either seek baptism with him or at least have become so favorable towards Christianity that they are willing that a member of their group should become baptized.”²⁵

In supporting group or mass conversion Dodge stressed that mass conversions did not do away with the personal commitment of each individual to God. Rather he taught that a personal religious experience involving a surrender of oneself to God was essential. For Dodge, mass conversion was only delaying baptism for an individual where

necessary until group consent had been given and group participation in the event of baptism was possible.

While the social gospel influenced Dodge's understanding of evangelism, it also influenced his preaching. His preaching was practical and relevant to common situations that the people of Angola faced. He sought to understand the life situation of his audience. The young people who came to hear his sermons at Luanda mission and would return to their villages and tell stories of an American preacher in the city were all drawn by the life situations Dodge lifted in his preaching. When he returned to Angola after the Second World War and moved to the Dembo region, Dodge went on hunting trips with men from the village because he wanted to be with them in their life situation from which he preached with authority and understanding. Even among Angolans who had become preachers, Dodge lamented that the greater insistence upon special, prolonged training for the ministry created a gulf of non-understanding between the clergy and the parishioners. Dodge understood that if he was to preach sermons which would help solve the immediate problems of the people, he had to be cognizant of the type of life they faced.

If the social gospel had the holistic effect of transforming the social environment as well as regenerating the individual, then the area that Dodge found this to be most significant was through education, both the classroom and the church. He had come to a conclusion that the success of the evangelization program and growth of the Methodist Church in Africa especially among the young people could not be separated from the church's education program. For Dodge, the social gospel fully explained the kind of abundant life Jesus promised. Growing up on the farm in Terril, Iowa, Dodge had less interest in academic education. He only wanted to graduate from high school and go into

farming. However, it was while he attended Taylor University, where he began to value the importance of education affirming that he “definitely needed more study to be a respectable workman in the Lord’s vineyard.”²⁶ The result of his diligent work and appreciation of education eventually culminated into a Ph.D dissertation. Thus, Dodge knew and appreciated the extent to which education played in transforming him into a respectable man. Thus, Dodge had such the same desire for his many African brothers and sisters.

From his five years of missionary work in Angola, Dodge had seen how many young Angolans who had desired education for the benefits of assimilating into the Portuguese culture and became removed from their own culture and people. However, Dodge was not convinced this was best for the Angolans. Consequently, Dodge advocated for an education that would adequately prepare young people to fit back into the framework of the society which had produced them, “equipped to meet all the exigencies of life among which will inevitably be that of adjusting their culture to make it compatible with the Christian ethic.”²⁷ Therefore, Dodge felt that teachers in mission schools had a responsibility greater than the government schools as it was their goal not only to know the subject they taught, but to understand the student and his or her culture, so that upon completion of studies, the student would be better prepared to return.

Furthermore, Dodge saw Christian education in local churches as a tool of grafting Christian practices to the stock of indigenous cultures. He conceded that the “traditional Bantu culture is being brought into contact with that of foreigners. Governments, missions, European plantations, merchants, travelers, explorers, and now the armed forces, all form points of culture contact.”²⁸ He noted that many missionaries

had made the mistake to consider the gospel in terms of their western culture with some going to the extent of insisting that ideals of their national civilization were superior to those of the local culture. Dodge cautioned against such teaching as he pointed out that sooner or later an ethnic group would come to a realization that it was losing its national soul. When that happened, there would be a sudden reaction against western civilization so that the culture might purge everything it identified to be hostile to its original culture; namely, Christianity.

Western civilization versus the Gospel

The five years Dodge spent in Angola helped him conclude that Western civilization which David Livingstone and Bishop Taylor had promoted was a poor substitute for Christianity, noting that the former “breaks down, disintegrates and destroys the good as well as the bad in an African culture, whereas the Gospel on the other hand destroys only the bad, retaining and strengthening the good. Western civilization breaks down, often not to build; it digs its grave and knows no resurrection. The Gospel, or rather Christ, breaks down in order to recreate and make out of the apparent ruins an eternal and glorious new creation.”²⁹ A good Christian education, in Dodge’s view, would help the indigenous people to know that Christianity and western modes of life were two distinct and separate things. For Dodge, western civilization was not Christianity and Christianity was not western civilization.

In his dissertation Dodge noted that European colonization of Africa had driven an additional wedge into the people and its society that had affected the peoples’

solidarity with one another. By educating the youth according to foreign ideas and traditions, it had created a widening gap between the conservative elders and their detribalized offspring. This created a tension that proved to sever many strands of culture. As a result, confusion followed clearing the way for a more serious conflict. When elders of the community felt they were no longer respected and the younger generations felt out of touch with their traditional cultures, society became fragmented. Dodge's time in Angola taught him that as far as culture was concerned, this was a country in great transition. The Europeanized African youth had become the most active culture agents of change.

Many of these changes Dodge observed as beneficial to society. Mainly, education had helped reduce infanticide, better defined marriage and helped in tribal governance. With regards to infanticide, In some African tribes, this was an approved practice if: a child was born feet first; if a child was born with tooth already out or a child cutting the first tooth in the upper jaw; if a child was defecating at birth; if a child was born of a woman who had not yet menstruated; if a child was unable to walk by three years of age; or if a child was born with any deformity such as being an albino or was a twin. Infanticide varied depending on the tribe, especially the method employed to destroy those deemed undesirable. In some cases a child might be suffocated or strangled, others were thrown in the bush to be devoured by wild animals and others were simply drowned.³⁰ While Dodge personally did not experience infanticide while in Africa, he had read many stories about such traditions and had seen children who were brought to mission stations because their parents feared the practice might happen to their child.

Another issue that Dodge confronted more often was that of marriage and certain marriage practices in tribal culture that subscribed to polygamy. Polygamy was virtually practiced in every village he visited as the practice was often by arrangement between families. Barrenness of the woman or impotency of the man furnished grounds for separation, although it was not considered divorce. Grounds for divorce included having a contagious disease, desertion, excessive cruelty, laziness, and adultery. Children were ardently desired not only for social reasons but also because they offered economic advantage and political strength to tribal groups. Through Christian education, Dodge noted that great strides had been achieved to teach believers about monogamy and the practice of polygamy decreased over time.

On tribal governance, Dodge stated that the highest in authority was the great chief - king (*mambo*). Under him were sub-chiefs (*madzishe*) who were directly connected with the village headmen (*sabhuku*). The families were represented by elders. Below the commoners, socially and politically, were the slaves, who as a rule were barred from any part in tribal government. Some women had been known to exercise the highest tribal authority. Furthermore, the authority of the chief was based on religious and economic factors as well as those of political nature. It was the chief who represented the tribe in religious ceremonies. The chief was the mediator between the seen and the unseen tribal groups. The control of the chief over land was largely economic and helped the chief maintain his authority amongst the tribe.

Overall, the institution of chieftainship was primarily political. However, this would change as the advent of the European powers had greatly changed the political machinery of the Bantu tribal groups.³¹ While Dodge sympathized that African political

institutions were slowly being undermined, consciously or unknowingly, by colonial governments and agendas, he also appreciated what that meant for people who wanted to become Christians but were prevented from doing so by their tribal chiefs. In Angola, some tribal groups still permitted slavery.

Early African resistance to Portuguese labor laws

After more than fifty year of European occupation and dominance in Africa, Dodge began to see the seeds of African resistance to European occupation. It was not questionable that white and black people were both entrenched in Africa. However, in Angola, black Africans who resisted the Portuguese government were immediately arrested and sent to St. Thomas Island to work indefinitely on cocoa plantations.³² Even with the Portuguese policy of assimilation, the race relations in Angola were low. By 1940 Dodge began to see that if the gulf between the two races was allowed to widen, “the task of propagating Christianity in Africa will become increasingly difficult, if not impossible.”³³ This is a theme that Dodge was developing even in the early 1940s, that racial practices that discriminated against Africans were a threat to evangelization.

It was within this context that Dodge wanted to know what it meant to be an effective missionary. His dominant desire was to present the gospel in an effective way as possible. He concluded that the acceptance of the Gospel he preached would be conditioned by the attitude of his hearers to him as an individual and that the acceptance of Christianity depended, among other things, to the personality of the ambassador of

Christ.³⁴ Conscious of this fact, Dodge was desirous to be a channel through which, rather than a barrier over or around which, the life-giving flow of the gospel must travel.

On May 24th, 1944 three weeks after a new bishop, Dr. Newell Snow Booth was elected and assigned to Africa, Dodge successfully defended his dissertation and graduated from school. Upon graduation, Dodge finished his appointment year with the church in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts and was requested to work full time with the Board of Missions in New York. For nearly a year Dodge travelled in many states speaking in many churches to raise funds for missions. As the war in Europe was coming to a close, the Board of Missions informed the Dodges to be prepared to travel back to Angola. With the war being over, it was once again safe for children and families to be on the seas.

Back to Angola

On May 9th, 1945 the family sailed on the Joao Belo from Philadelphia to Lisbon. In July, they arrived in Luanda in time for the Angola Annual Conference session that was being held at the Luanda mission station. For Bishop Booth, this was his first annual conference as bishop. Before his election, he had served in Belgian Congo as a missionary from 1930 to 1942. However, Dodge and Booth had known each other for two years at Hartford when Dodge was writing his dissertation and Booth was the chairman of the Africa department at Hartford Seminary Foundation.

When the Dodges arrived in Angola they were projected to return to Quessua by the Board of Missions where Dodge could continue as the Dean at the William Taylor

Bible School. However, due to an ongoing crisis at the Luanda mission station, Bishop Booth wanted Dodge in Luanda. While Dodge had been away, the city planners had redrawn a new city plan for Luanda. The Methodist land and buildings were greatly affected by the new city plan. The new plan projected constructions of a Roman Catholic cathedral and a hotel on the site of the mission center. As a result, The Luanda mission center was relocated to elsewhere in the city. However, Bishop Booth wanted to retain their site and the buildings, but the Klebsattels were due for their furlough. Thus, Bishop Booth needed someone who knew Luanda very well to negotiate with the city planners to save the mission station and its properties.

To accomplish this task, Bishop Booth appointed Dodge to be the District Superintendent of the Luanda district. Dodge was not ready for this appointment and he wondered whether the appointment was “God’s plan or a stubborn bishop’s idea?”³⁵ When Dodge lived in Luanda and also served as the secretary of the Evangelical Alliance in Angola he stated he had experienced “religious discrimination and a lack of forthrightness in official dealings.”³⁶ He knew it was not going to be easy to deal with the Portuguese and Roman Catholic officials who worked in government and at the city hall. He wrote,

As Protestants we were in Portuguese Africa only because the 1885 Treaty of Berlin guaranteed certain religious freedoms. We were Protestants in a very highly, traditional Roman Catholic country. We were working to uplift the blacks when African advancement was a growing fear among the white population. We knew that we were being tolerated, subject to good behavior. A constant reminder was the case of a young Methodist Missionary who had written a letter to his mother in the Dakotas, mildly criticizing the labor conditions in Angola. He was given three days to leave the country, never to return. Censorship was thorough.³⁷

While the Berlin Treaty of 1885 had granted certain religious freedoms to all missionaries to work in Africa, Protestant missionaries in Portuguese Africa often experienced religious discrimination from the Roman Catholic official majority. Signed on February 26, 1885 the treaty supposedly guaranteed protection of missionaries and travelers as well as relative religious liberties in the African lands that had been partitioned in the preceding Berlin Conference of 1884, however in practice, this was not always the case. Article VI of the 1885 Berlin Treaty read,

All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories shall bind themselves without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organized for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization. Christian missionaries, scientists and explorers, with their followers, property and collections, shall likewise be the objects of especial protection.³⁸

In Luanda, the Dodges rented a house where Europeans only lived, away from the mission station because all the houses at the mission center were occupied. They enrolled their kids, Edward and Lois in a government primary school with the intention that the kids would make friends with other European kids. Both Edward Jr. and Lois had lost their knowledge of the Portuguese language because of their prolonged stay in the United States of America due to war. The children would have a difficult time at the government school and were often mocked because of their American accent. When the Klebsattels finally left for their furlough the Dodges moved in the house the Klebsattels used at the mission center. This also helped in moving the children to a private school where they could complete their primary education.

When Dodge settled in Luanda his major task was to negotiate with the city officials for the Methodist Church to retain its properties. This included all of the land and buildings at the mission station. The city officials were convinced and charging that the land owned by the Methodist Church in Luanda, where the Luanda Mission station was located, was given to the early Methodist missionaries as a concession by the government. Now that the government was exercising its right to take back its land from the church, it could assign the church another piece of land, and one further away from the city. It was obvious to Dodge that the city officials whom Dodge called “the Roman Catholic fathers”³⁹ were determined to take the land away from the Methodist Church and give it to the Roman Catholics to build their cathedral.

However, Dodge would not back down from his claim that the church was legally purchased by the Methodist Church and therefore successfully argued that it was in the church’s rights to remain. Nonetheless, city planners were successful at condemning some of the houses at the mission center. Furthermore, they demanded new developments on the land or the city would take back all undeveloped properties. With these mounting pressures, the Board of Missions quickly provided money to build houses on the property. As a result, the city officials dragged their feet to approve the building plans while at the same time subjecting the mission with strenuous regulations. To get a license and permit to build the houses at the mission station, the matter had to involve officials in Lisbon and Luanda which delayed the projects with Lisbon officials blaming Luanda officials for the delay and vice versa. For more than six months, Dodge said that he was “frustrated by the referral technique and all the continual come-back-tomorrow delays on even small matters which could be settled immediately.”⁴⁰ While they never openly

refused to, it was clear the officials did not want to issue the permit to the Methodist Church.

When the permit was finally issued after six months of follow ups with city officials, Dodge attributed it to organized weekly prayer at the church. When the permit was issued “the congregation well knew that now the Protestants would continue to worship on that site, and that the new Catholic cathedral would be built somewhere.”⁴¹

Dodge’s weekly and sometimes daily dealings with the Portuguese officials who were working at the city hall reinforced the idea that Protestants in Angola were discriminated against by the Roman Catholic officials. He confessed that one thing that offended his conscience was “the generally practiced religious discrimination in Portuguese Africa”⁴² and that “The bigotry and opposition of the Roman Catholic hierarchy makes normal missionary operations difficult.”⁴³ An Angolan historian, Dr. Jose Julio Gancalves writing about religious discrimination in Angola stated that the Portuguese policy was that “while Protestants were not to be opposed openly, they were not to be encouraged or they would grow too rapidly; therefore the only feasible way to handle the Protestant problem was to discriminate. Though it had laws proclaiming to the world that it endorsed freedom, it instructed its agents to interpret those laws so as to thwart the Protestant witness.”⁴⁴

This unofficial policy of obstruction by Portuguese officials to discriminate against Protestants was also implemented through education. A main area of concern was that in Angola, the Portuguese government did not allow Protestants to train school teachers. Dodge observed that, “In Angola and Mozambique, by agreement between

Lisbon and the Vatican, nearly all African education is turned over to the Roman Catholic Church, which gets much of its support from public funding.”⁴⁵ In Angola, the Roman Catholic Church was given the sole responsibility by the Portuguese government to train school teachers and admission into teacher-training colleges required applicants to produce their Roman Catholic baptism certificates. Young Angolan Methodists were “forced either to deny their own faith in seeking a repetition of the ceremonies in the Catholic Church or to forego the needed documents.”⁴⁶ Protestant missions like the Methodist Church were forced either to hire Roman Catholic teachers to fill teaching positions in their schools or to recruit untrained teachers who had gone through the William Taylor Bible School. In spite of the challenges that the Methodist Church faced in promoting education, they continued to endure in such a strained environment. Dodge reported on 17 December, 1945 that in the Dembo region where he was the District superintendent, “In spite of the opposition from some Portuguese plantation owners who see their source of cheap labor disappearing with more education for the natives, the work continues to grow and expand. We now have thirteen well organized churches and scores of classes.”⁴⁷

Another area of religious discrimination against the Protestants was the rejection of their marriage and baptismal certificates by the Portuguese officials. Marriage certificates were especially important for government benefits or allocation of houses in cities. The government officials only recognized marriage certificates issued by the Roman Catholic Church. Dodge stated that the Portuguese government did not “recognize Protestant churches as legal entities and usually referred to them as sects.”⁴⁸

For someone who never experienced discrimination in America, Dodge did not take these discriminations lightly. He realized the enormous challenges that the Angolans were facing in their home country. As a missionary based in Luanda he felt limited in what he could do for the Africans but maintained his emphasis to circumvent what barriers imposed on the church where he was able.

Eunice's illness and birth of Peggy

By September 1946, Dodge was forced to turn his attention to more family matters. Eunice who was three months pregnant with their fourth child got seriously sick with a hemorrhage which nearly caused a miscarriage. With the help of her African women neighbors at the mission station they managed to reduce the bleeding as they waited for their doctor to come and attend to her. When the doctor finally came he examined Eunice and recommended that she lied on her back the whole night with very little movement. The doctor insisted that Eunice was having a miscarriage and that it was safe if he would assist her to abort. Eunice insisted that she wanted the baby. When the doctor left Dodge and the two African women who had come to help her knelt by her bedside and prayed. Dodge recalled, "We prayed, holding hands; we committed Eunice and the unborn baby into the Father's keeping and His loving care."⁴⁹

The doctor recommended to Eunice that she rest and not do any work. The bleeding subsided but did not completely end. She stayed in bed most of the time except for a few times she walked in the house. As a result, Dodge was needed more at home to help with the children and care for Eunice. Eunice's condition prevented Dodge to visit

churches and he resorted to gardening. He grew vegetables which he shared with his neighbors.

After nearly six months of home care, Eunice gave birth to a baby girl on February 1, 1947. They named her Margaret Jean Dodge but would later call her Peggy. The doctor recommended that Eunice stay in hospital a little longer after giving birth because she was so frail. Because Eunice was slow to have milk for the baby and baby formulas were not available in Luanda, the baby was in great need of milk. When Dodge saw an African woman in one of the rooms at the hospital who had also given birth, breastfeeding her baby, he asked her if she had enough milk to spare for his daughter. Not only was she surprised that a white male would ask an African woman for milk, it was taboo in her culture to breastfeed someone else's baby. After assuring the woman that it was safe for her to breastfeed Peggy, the woman agreed. Dodge would later say about Peggy, "It's no wonder that Peggy has always felt that Africa is her home: that is where she drew her first breath, and from that source she had her first meal."⁵⁰

Close call with malaria

After a healthy Eunice and baby were discharged from the hospital, Dodge went back to his district responsibilities. For the past six months he had to stay in Luanda to look after his family. He was now ready to take some much needed visits outside the city. His first visit was to Golungo- Alto located two hundred and seventy-five miles north of Luanda. He boarded a train to Golungo-Alto, a trip that included an all-day train ride, and then additional walking and canoeing on the river. Since he had already informed the

pastors in the region that he was coming, they were prepared to receive him. Rev. Joaquim Cristiano and his wife received Dodge and served as his host there. However, in his first night there, he came down with a serious case of malaria. When the pastor came to his room the following day, Dodge's pajamas and bed sheets were all drenched in sweat. He could hardly stand or eat anything. The pastor went to the local hospital to plead with a Portuguese doctor to come and see Dodge at the parsonage. When the doctor arrived, he administered an injection for Dodge to reduce the fever and increased his dosage of the quinine.

The following Saturday, Dodge was scheduled to preside over an area charge conference. The pastors asked their District Superintendent to reschedule the charge conference because he could barely walk. Instead, Dodge delegated the two pastors to preside over the charge conference with each receiving reports for the other's church. On the following Sunday, Dodge was scheduled to preach at the big evangelism rally that included baptisms where all churches in the area gathered for worship. Although he had slightly regained strength, Dodge was only able to greet the congregation and had to ask Rev. Cristiano to preach and administer the baptism.

By the next day, Dodge's health had improved and he awoke feeling better. While Rev. Cristiano urged his District Superintendent to rest or to go back to Luanda for the sake of his health, Dodge saw a need to continue with his work by visiting the other churches he had already scheduled for charge conferences.

Dodge boarded another train to go further north to the region of Dondo. It was there that he spent two days with Rev. Mendes de Silva and his wife. Dondo was

significant because it was the place where Bishop Taylor had established his second mission station. Consequently, Dondo was one of the stations later abandoned because the missionaries stationed there had died of malaria. However, now an African pastor was not only in charge of the church but he was preserving and maintaining the cemetery where the first missionaries were buried. After presiding over a charge conference Dodge visited the gravesides of the early missionaries. Looking at the graves, Dodge openly wept. It was a strong reminder of the dangers and fragility of doing God's work in the mission field. Knowing he too was recovering from malaria, a disease that had nearly killed his missionary brethren was overwhelming for Dodge as he stood there among the graves. Standing there Dodge writes that he "sensed the price the pioneers paid" and the graves reminded him that "life in Africa was uncertain at best."⁵¹ Missionaries face many struggles and sacrifices and often face persecution and criticism, but for Dodge he could not think of any group of people who were more earnest, sincere and devoted to their calling than his fellow Christian missionaries. He writes, "Among the martyrs, missionaries number not a few. Trees, stones and crudely carved wooden crosses mark their remains."⁵²

From Dondo, Dodge paddled a canoe for four hours along the Cuanza River to visit more of the churches in his district, arriving at Mulende and then Bom Jesus, the site of a sugar plantation and refinery. At Bom Jesus, Dodge once again presided over a charge conference on a Saturday that concluded with an evangelism rally on Sunday. After worship he walked for eight miles to the nearest train station where he was able to board a train back to Luanda. Altogether his trip away from Luanda lasted ten days.

When Dodge returned from visiting churches in Dondo area, he immediately began to plan a visit to the Dembo region to preside over charge conferences there. It was Dembo that Dodge had a soft spot in his heart for because they were ones Dodge had first received requests for preachers after some young people from this area had visited the Luanda Mission Station. He fondly remembered how they had courageously returned to their own people and told stories of going to church in the city. And after visiting with them, Dodge boldly appointed two young evangelists to plant churches in the region. He later moved his associate pastor, the Reverend Pedro Neto from Luanda Mission and appointed him to the Dembo people without consulting the bishop. Indeed, Dembo was a region that was very important to Dodge and one he earnestly wanted to succeed, as he had played a critical role in helping lay a solid foundation for the church there.

Since his then departure and now return to Angola, the foundation that was laid had flourished. In an official letter, dated December 17, 1945, Dodge reported thirteen organized churches in the Dembo region. While transport to this region was very scarce and because Dodge did not have a vehicle, he thought about the Portuguese farmers who had started growing coffee in this region, so he aimed he had to hitch hike on one of the coffee trucks from the city that would go to Dembo. When he found a coffee truck going to the Dembo region, the Portuguese truck driver offered him a ride with two other drunk and dirty talking Portuguese men. The ride was very uncomfortable for Dodge because of the drinking and filthy language used by his three travelling companions. However, it was during their journey that Dodge learned that the driver who had driven the truck on its last trip had overloaded the truck and at some point decided to leave five bags of coffee at one of the villages. Because the driver had forgotten the name of the village

where he had left the bags of coffee, throughout the journey, the truck driver would stop to ask about the five bags of coffee. This slowed down the trip. Each time, however, when the driver asked the villagers about the bags of coffee, they would indicate that they had no knowledge of them.

By the time they arrived in one of the Dembo villages called Kingombe, it was already dark outside and the villagers were already in their huts resting for the night. The truck driver blasted the horn of his truck and after a while a man wrapped in a blanket came to the truck and the driver called, “Do you know anything about five sacks of coffee?” The man replied, “Yes Sir, they are here.” The driver asked, “You didn’t steal any of it?” To which the man replied, “In this village we do not steal. We are Christians. We belong to the Methodist Church.”⁵³

Upon hearing this, Dodge happily disembarked from the truck but he would not forget his journey to Dembo with the Portuguese driver. He later wrote that the conversation between the truck driver and the African Methodist man showed that “there is power in the gospel to change individual lives and alter cultural patterns. How I praised God for the privilege of having had a part in bringing the Gospel to the Dembo people.”⁵⁴

In Kingombe, Dodge decided to stay for the night, wanting to see for himself the next day how the gospel had changed the people in the village. Since the man had declared that he was Methodist, Dodge knew that these Methodists would offer hospitality and allow him to stay the night.

The Dembo people had experienced a great deal of change even before the arrival of the Methodist Church. Before Dodge first visited the Dembo region in 1937 the

villagers lost much of their land to Portuguese coffee growers who moved to the area and marked out large tracts of land. Without consent, they appropriated lands the villagers had settled for generations. While some Angolans who had money were allowed to buy land and grow coffee, the majority of the coffee growers who registered the land with the Portuguese government often expelled the Africans from their land. In some cases, the Portuguese forced the villagers to work on the coffee plantations and on the land which they had previously owned. Those who refused to work on the coffee plantations were forced to pay taxes. As a result, villagers resorted to sending their young men to the city to work and bring home enough money to pay the taxes. For some who chose to work on the coffee plantations often resorted to stealing axes, hoes, bush knives and other implements on the coffee farms. In a way, stealing from the Portuguese farmers was a form of protesting the injustice of lost land.

Even so, some of the young men who went to Luanda to work to get money for taxes and attended church at the Luanda Mission became Christians.⁵⁵ When they returned to their home villages they began to live different lives and shared experiences at the church in Luanda. This was the main reason as to why the elders were had first requested preachers and teachers for their village in 1937 and what spurred Dodge's first visit to Dembo in 1937. The revival of the Dembo people that swept their villages as a result of the work of the Methodist Church began to transform lives in a number of ways. Tools that were previously stolen were reportedly returned to Portuguese tool sheds. Furthermore, it is the main reason why the villagers at Kingombe had taken good care of the five bags of coffee that were left behind that were returned to the coffee truck driver.

Ten years after Dodge's first visit to Dembo, he was excited to be back for a third time in the place where revival had taken off in 1937. By this time, it was reported that thousands of villagers were ready to receive baptism. In a remarkable event along the river, Dodge describes the setting:

We went into a slow-flowing, clear stream on a warm, sunny day and as the new converts were named, we cradled them in our arms and, with my right hand on their heads, we put them completely under. They then walked up the bank of the stream and dried themselves in the sun. At the close of the service they had their first communion kneeling on the grass. I was reminded of Jesus' miracle of feeding the five thousand, but we communed together, not with fish and loaves nor wafers and wine, but with the juice from some native berries and pieces toasted cassava root. After such mountaintop experience, I had to return to the city and continue the struggle for our right to exist as a church.⁵⁶

It had always been Dodge's flexibility and ability to adjust to the situation that always made him a friend with the people and especially the pastors that he supervised as their District Superintendent. Dodge had learned a lot in his first and second visit to Angola. The Dembo people welcomed and respected him for these reasons. He had already shown them that he could eat their food, sleep in their homes, and now he used the elements the Dembo used for Holy Communion.

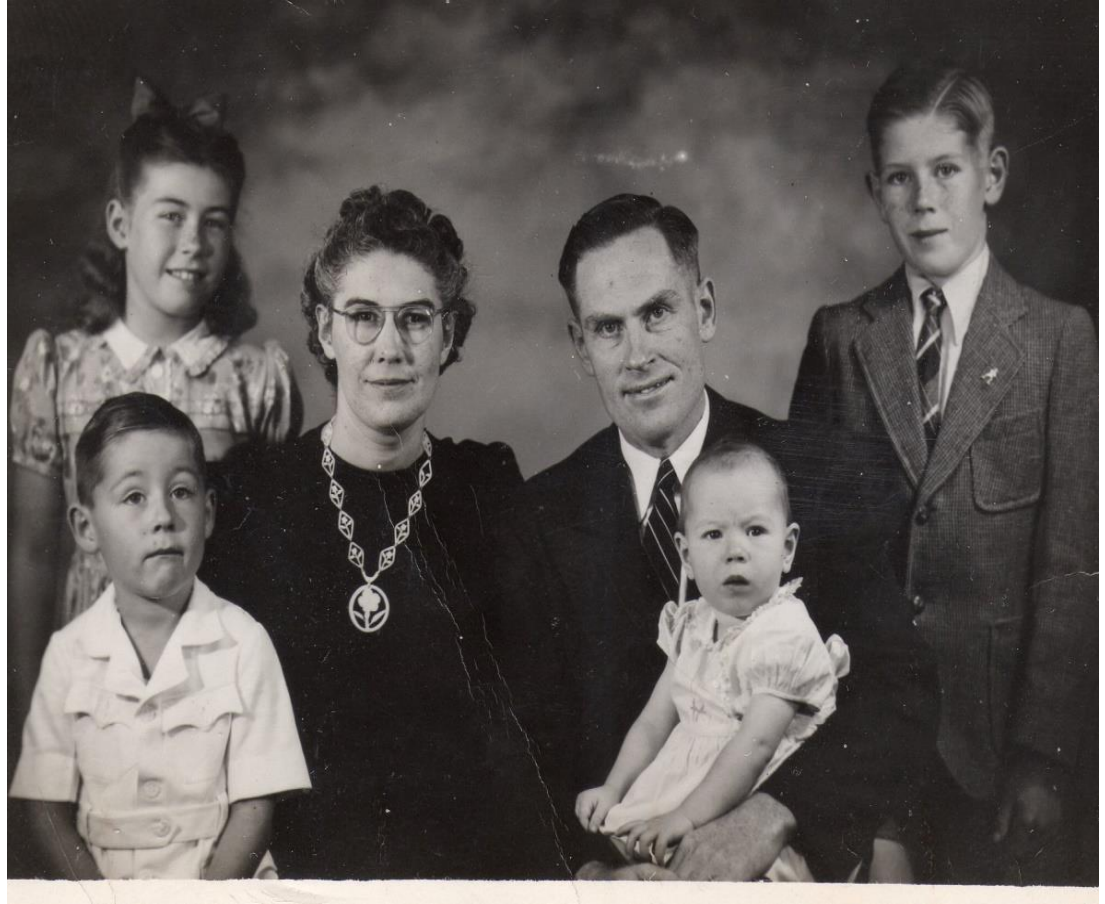
Peggy's baptism

Fresh from a marvelous and fruitful trip to Dembo, returning to Luanda, Dodge and Eunice decided that it was time for their daughter Peggy to be baptized in the local church at Luanda mission. Reverend Julio Joao Miguel was serving as the pastor at

Luanda Mission, a man Dodge had first recommended to Bishop Booth, and who was known for his charismatic preaching. On the day Peggy was to be baptized, Dodge was pleased to learn that there were other children to be baptized. Several other missionaries from other churches were present to witness the baptism of Peggy.

As the names of the children to be baptized were called, Eunice had Peggy in her arms as Dodge joined her and stood with other parents at the altar of the church. Rev. Miguel read the baptism rites as the parents all responded in turn. As Rev. Miguel began to baptize the children, when he came to Eunice who was holding Peggy in her hands, he stepped aside expecting that Dodge or one of the other missionaries would step forward to baptize Peggy. However, Dodge did not move but stayed next to Eunice. At that point, Rev. Miguel whispered to Dodge, “Are you or one of the missionaries not going to baptize her?”

Dodge replied, “Of course not, you carry on.”⁵⁷ Pleasantly surprised, Rev. Miguel took Peggy in his arms and baptized her. This would be a significant moment in the history of Angola Methodism as Rev. Miguel was the first African pastor in the Methodist Church in Angola to baptize a missionary’s child.



Dodge Family Passport Photo 1947. From left: Lois, Clifford, Eunice, Ralph with Peggy on his lap and Ed standing.

Africa Central Conference in Zimbabwe

At the July 1947 meeting of the annual conference held at Quessua mission, Dodge and Eunice were among the delegates elected by the Angola Annual Conference to attend the 1948 Central Conference, to be held in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.⁵⁸ Fourteen delegates, seven missionaries and seven Africans were elected to attend the Central Conference as Dodge was chosen to head the Angolan delegation.

In 1948, Bishop Booth approved a three month leave so that Dodge could attend the Central Conference. Bishop Booth was impressed by the reports of the work in the Dembos region. The work among the Dembos was growing more rapidly than any another region in Angola and yet there was no Methodist mission station in the region. As a result, the bishop consulted Dodge about the possibility of opening a new mission center in the Dembos. Both men agreed, and Bishop Booth asked Dodge that upon return from a mini furlough and attending Central Conference that he would be reassigned to the Dembos to help start the new mission center and to supervise the work of the church in that region. Bishop Booth expected that a new missionary family would soon be assigned to Angola and it was his preference for the new missionary to begin work in Luanda. The decision pleased Dodge as he was eager to be among the Dembos and away from Luanda and the obstacles and challenges of the Portuguese government. Furthermore, he was grateful that the work he had started among the Dembos was being properly recognized and that he would have the privilege to supervise it on a daily basis.

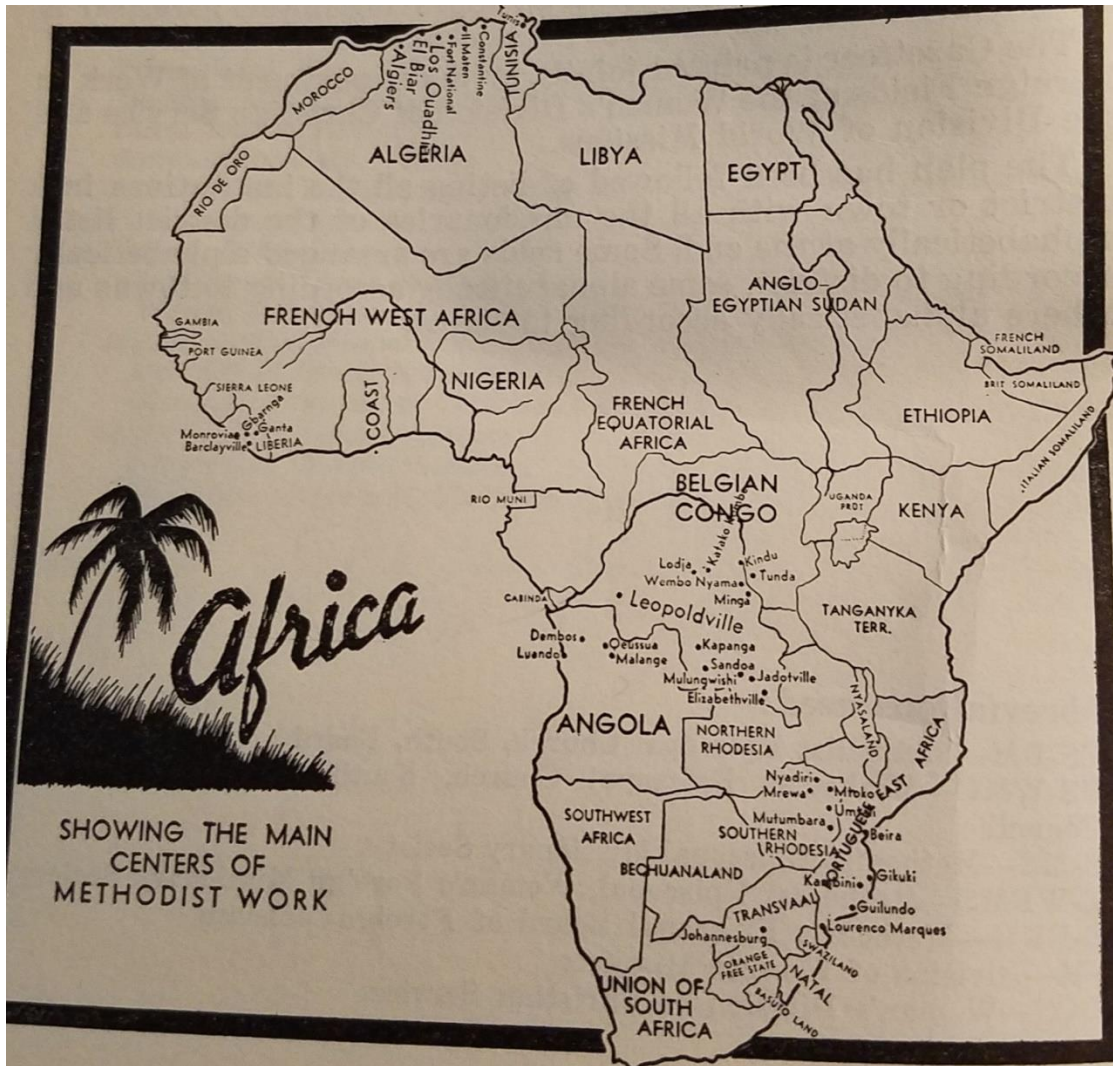
Still however, the challenge away from Luanda was a risky one in that Dodge would have to continue to contend with his bouts of malaria. Furthermore, since returning to Angola from his extended furlough overseas in July 1945, Dodge had not afforded himself enough time to rest and to take proper care of himself. District work had also kept him away from family as he travelled across such a large district for days at a time. Even more so, the work was made much more difficult by not having a vehicle. Instead, he was forced to rely on trains and hitch-hiking to travel to his churches in the rural areas.

Finally, in May 1948 Dodge was able to purchase a vehicle, a Chevrolet Carryall. Having a vehicle allowed them a greater deal of flexibility and ease for both business and pleasure. The Dodges decided to use the vehicle to drive to Zimbabwe. However, they failed to take into account the scorching heat of Southern Africa, especially in August to October. Joining them on the journey to Zimbabwe was another missionary family, Hartzlers. Since Omar Hartzler had been reared in the Congo, he was familiar with and knew the road that led to Zimbabwe. Conditions inside both cars were a bit cramped. Dodge had his family of six and the Hartzlers were also a family of six. In his car, Dodge removed the back two seats of the Chevrolet Carryall and spread blankets for the children to sleep on.

Driving across Africa would be quite an adventure for anyone, much less having to do it with a large family of children. Nonetheless, in early August, both families started their long journey toward Zimbabwe. By now, Ed was twelve, Lois ten, Clifford almost six and Peggy was eighteen months. They drove through Elizabethville in the Congo and planned to drive through Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia). However, in Elizabethville (now Lubumbashi), they were warned about uprisings in Zambia that had caused serious gasoline shortages. In preparation of the unknown, they purchased a fifty gallon drum and filled it with gas, placing it in the middle of the Chevrolet Carryall. They filled both cars with gas and proceeded with their trip into Zambia. In a letter while still in Zimbabwe in November, Eunice writes:

The long drive from Angola to Southern Rhodesia (we have done over two thousand miles so far) was not exactly a picnic under the blazing African sun, with the children getting crosser as each hot day melted into the next. And such things as getting stuck in the sand (when Eunice drove) and having a big blowout (when Ralph drove) and breaking four springs (one when Eddie drove), while they added variety to the days, still didn't add to the pleasure of travelling.⁵⁹

In an interview with the author Edward Jr. described the trip as excruciating and said of the trip, "I was a twelve old boy and we drove across the continent. I remember how bad the roads were. Every instrument in the car broke. Anything, the odometer, clock. We would stop to dig the car out of sand and at one point I drove the car as everyone pushed it out of sand."⁶⁰ Instead of the one week they had planned to travel to Zimbabwe, they ended spending two weeks on the road as they were forced to stop and repair the cars.



1948 Map of Africa showing where Methodist centers were located.

The Central Conference, Ralph's first international conference, was held at Old Mutare (then Old Umtali). With 52 delegates from Angola, Mozambique, the Congo and Rhodesia, twenty six of them were missionaries and twenty six Africans. Dodge was quick to observe that the missionaries did most of the talking throughout the conference.⁶¹ Furthermore, when the conference elected an all-white executive committee to attend to urgent matters of the Central Conference during the remainder of the

quadrennium, it was a clear indication to Dodge that the Methodist Church in Africa was deeply entrenched in the interests of white missionaries.

Following the completion of the conference, the Dodges rented a home in the city of Mutare (then Umtali) where they stayed for part of the midterm furlough. Then, they rented a cabin in the beautiful Nyanga Mountains for two weeks. This allowed Eunice an opportunity to spend time writing letters and Dodge an opportunity to fish. Nyanga is especially known for its trout fishing. Fishing reminded him of the time he spent with his father fishing on Spirit Lake in Iowa. Thus, for Dodge this trip to Nyanga Mountains was both refreshing and much needed. It gave him time to rest and reflect on life. Dodge writes, “Although we did not want any more children, I was glad to be a man again.”⁶² After the trip to Nyanga they returned to Mutare where they spent Christmas. The trip to Zimbabwe also afforded Dodge the opportunity to visit and learn from other mission centers.

A new Methodist mission center among the Dembos

The return home did not seem as eventful as the trip to Zimbabwe. Upon their arrival back in Angola, Dodge prepared to move to the Dembo region as was arranged before they had left for the Central Conference. By this time, the new missionary, Melvin Blake and family, had arrived and already moved into the house that the Dodges used at Luanda Mission. Since there was no housing available to accommodate the Dodges at Dembo, the Missionary Committee, which controlled housing for missionaries in Angola, decided that it was better for Eunice and the children to move from Luanda to Quessua.

In the meantime, Dodge would go alone to the new mission site to begin the new building project. With Dodge already being quite familiar with the Dembo region, he settled on establishing the new mission center at Mufuque. With the immediate need at Mufuque being a house for the missionary, The Board of Missions approved the funding for the site. When Eunice and the children were moved to Quessua, where she was assigned to teach, Dodge moved to Mufuque.

As has already been discussed in this study, one of the ongoing challenges in Angola was the Portuguese government's policy on the qualifications of its teachers. Specifically, the government required that only white Portuguese were allowed to teach the Portuguese language in the Protestant mission schools. Because most white Portuguese were Roman Catholic, the government aimed to limit the number of new Protestant schools. However, Dodge was able to contract a Portuguese couple, Antonio and Adelina Rodrigues, to teach at the Luanda mission. Both Antonio and Adelina were born in Angola and had converted to Methodism while at the Luanda mission. To Dodge, they were impressive because Antonio "was one of those versatile men who can turn his hand to almost anything."⁶³ In fact, before Dodge went on his midterm furlough in Zimbabwe, he had asked Antonio if he was willing to be a fulltime staff member at the church. Furthermore, he asked him to move to Mufuque on a salary of eighteen hundred dollars a year.⁶⁴ Dodge also had the full support of Bishop Booth in this area. As a result, Antonio's salary was included in the budget for the new mission at Mufuque when Antonio agreed to take the position. Before his own arrival, Dodge sent Antonio ahead to Mufuque to construct temporary living quarters.

The hiring of Antonio proved to be a good decision both inside and outside the classroom. By the time Dodge arrived at Mufuque, Antonio, with the help of the locals, had successfully constructed a tool shed and a stick- and- mud, four roomed house with zinc roof. In addition, he had already begun constructing a larger building, an adobe brick house. With Antonio's family already living in the stick-and-mud house, Dodge moved into the thatched tool shed. In the meantime, Adelina offered to cook for him and do his laundry. The hope was that once the brick house was completed then Dodge would be able to bring his family to Mufuque.

While Antonio worked to finish the house, Adelina began teaching at the new school at the mission center. Dodge, the first ever District Superintendent of the newly created Dembo District, spent most of his time visiting the churches of the region.

Upon completion of the new brick house by Antonio, Dodge suggested that the Rodrigues live there while he and his family would move in the stick-and-mud house. Taken aback by such a gracious offer, Antonio tried to refuse the offer but Dodge insisted that he take it. Antonio finally agreed to the new plan and in June 1949, Dodge left Dembo to retrieve his family.

While the conditions may not have been ideal, Eunice, who had hastily sent a letter to the Board of Missions in 1936 to complain about the housing conditions in Luanda, did not complain about the stick-and-mud house at Mufuque. Although it was a far cry from the one the family had lived in Luanda and at Quessua. Ed. Jr. remembered that the family was happy in the rural setting and he never heard his mother complain about the conditions.⁶⁵ The family and Eunice especially had learned to adapt to their

conditions and the environment. Africa had taught them a great deal about the important things in life. Thus, life would continue, whether in a stick-mud-house or a nice adobe brick house. The experience in Angola had taught the Dodges that there were far more important things to worry about in this world than comfortable housing. There, in the stick-mud-house, in rural Dembo, life continued as Eunice home schooled her children.

At the July 1948 Angola Annual Conference, held at the Luanda mission, Rev. Guilherme Pereira Ingles, an African pastor, approached Dodge to seek his support for the request to host the 1949 Annual Conference Session at his church at Mucondo in the Dembo region. For as long as they had met, Annual Conferences had been held at mission stations where all delegates were accommodated in classrooms and where missionaries would be accommodated in more comfortable missionary homes. Seeing that this was a break from the norm, Dodge offered Rev. Ingles his support. When the pastor stood on the conference floor to invite the 1949 Annual Conference session to his church through a motion, his invitation was received with surprise, encouragement and ridicule. Eunice, who had grown accustomed to life in the bush sarcastically writes, “Imagine a new church in the Dembos trying to host an annual conference in the bush!! Where would the missionaries sleep? How would the congregation there prepare food for so many without any stoves?”⁶⁶

After much discussion on the conference floor concerning the issue, Bishop Booth turned to Dodge to offer his opinion on the matter given that he was the District Superintendent who would be hosting the event. Realizing the importance of having the Annual Conference meeting in the Dembo region, Dodge not only publically supported his pastor, but promised on behalf of his district that they would work together to host a

successful conference. For Dodge, this was an opportunity for the church to see the growing work of the church among the Dembos. Furthermore, Dodge viewed it as an opportunity to begin to understand mission in a new way, in terms of collaboration and partnership with indigenous leaders that he had proposed through his doctoral dissertation. With the passage of the resolution that the 1949 Annual Conference session be held at Mucondo in the Dembo region, Dodge excitedly and quickly began to organize churches in the district to work toward providing the infrastructure needed to host an Annual Conference.

Activities in Mucondo began immediately. Trees were felled and long dormitory-type structures were made. A big central dining hall was outlined, the sanctuary enlarged. A new house was built, to be used first as an office and lodging for Bishop Booth and later to be the local parsonage. All this was done by voluntary labor with saws and axes and other hand tools. All the buildings were covered with thatch.⁶⁷

The significance of the Annual Conference being hosted in Dembo as well as the revival that had taken place there over the past ten years enabled Dodge to see the fruit of seeds that had been planted over time.

Dodge was convinced of God's providential work on a large and small scale. For example, when Dodge first moved to Mufuque, he quickly set up his garden and began to keep chicken for eggs and meat. He soon realized there was a problem of a leopard that terrorized villagers, killing many livestock as well as injuring some people. The leopard had somehow gained a mystical notoriety in the village as the villagers were often afraid to travel at night. Realizing the danger that the leopard posed to the villagers and the fear it had caused, Dodge and Rodrigues decided to quietly resolve the matter. His answer was to raise goats in order to bait the leopard. He made a goat kraal near his house where

he kept them at night. He created an opening towards the goat kraal where he placed an iron trap in case the leopard would come to the goats. For months he would set up the trap every night and dismantle it in the morning.

A few weeks before the Annual Conference at Macondo, Dodge received a letter from Bishop Booth that Dr. Eugene L. Smith, the newly-elected General Secretary of the Board of Missions, and his wife Mrs. Idalene, were planning to attend the Annual Conference. It was Dr. Smith's first trip to Africa to familiarize himself with the Methodist work in Africa before he took over responsibility in New York. Bishop Booth's suggestion was that he and his wife together with the Smiths would first visit the new mission station at Mufuque, and then travel together with the Dodges to Mucondo for Annual Conference.

Dodge and Eunice arranged that on the day the Booths and Smiths were set to arrive, the Rodrigues would host the bishop for the night and their family would host the Smiths. When they arrived, Dodge showed the Bishop and the Dr. Smith the progress at the new mission station and also talking about the work of the church in the Dembo area.

Very early the next morning everyone in the village was awakened by a piercing noise and cries from the goat kraal. Rodrigues came to knock at the Dodge's door to inform Dodge that a leopard was caught in the trap. Dodge quickly dressed up and went out but he realized that he needed his .22 rifle which was in their bedroom where the Smiths were sleeping. He decided to enter the room quietly but the Smiths, however, had also been awakened by the leopard's cries.

To the Smiths' amazement, Dodge grabbed his rifle and rushed to the goat kraal with Dr. Smith in tow. A number of men from the village who had heard the noise had also gathered to watch the leopard as it tried to pull the chain with the trap that had firmly clamped around one of its hind legs. The villagers were first surprised that Dodge had a rifle but as they watched, Dodge aimed his rifle at the leopard and pulled the trigger. Immediately the leopard dropped to the ground and the problem of the leopard ceased to be an issue. Indeed, the killing of the leopard had a significant impact on Dodge's ministry with the villagers. He had eliminated one of their greatest dangers. Antonio Rodrigues tanned the leopard skin and they presented the leopard skin to Dr. Smith as a gift for his visit to the Dembo District. From that day, for Dodge, since the villagers knew he owned a rifle, the men would invite Dodge to their hunting trips. On one occasion, Dodge killed four buffaloes to which Eunice wrote "[Dodge found time to] go hunting and killed four buffaloes... and the natives are still talking about that wonderful day when everyone had meat to eat."⁶⁸

With the excitement of the leopard problem over, Dodge and the guests turned their attention to the long anticipated Annual Conference at Mucondo. The event was a touted as a success that set precedence for other local churches to host Annual Conference sessions away from the mission centers. The success of the conference had been largely due to the hard work, vision, and leadership of Rev. Ingles. Impressed by the significance of the event, Dr. Smith acknowledged that the conference at Mucondo was an "event of unusual significance... For the first time in history of African Methodism south of the equator, a Methodist Annual Conference was held in an African village with an African pastor as the conference host."⁶⁹

Because Dodge had supported Rev. Ingles and let him provide the leadership needed to run the event, he had proved to be a model District Superintendent. Dodge's attitude and character showed that he could provide support from behind the scenes and allow his pastors to take credit where credit was due.

Dr. Smith was particularly impressed by the church's overall work in the Dembo region under Dodge's leadership. In a letter he writes, "Our visit with you in the Dembos was the high point of the whole African trip, and that wasn't just because the leopard was so obliging as to get caught that night, but because of the whole spirit of the work there. I wish we had a thousand more missionaries like the two of you; we would really get a lot done."⁷⁰

Following the completion of Annual Conference, Dodge continued to push forward with his work and hopes for the Dembo District. In the short term, he was occupied with building a house which he would live. With Eunice's help, he designed the plan for the house. Locals volunteered to dig the foundation and hauled stones to and from the site.

However as work progressed, Dodge had to face the reality of the Portuguese labor laws that empowered white Portuguese coffee growers and sugar plantation owners to conscript able-bodied men to harvest coffee. The farmers would send trucks into villages to pick people to work their farms. In many cases they ended up picking women and children who would otherwise be in school. Coffee season meant that all activities of the Africans were subordinately put aside until the coffee was harvested, and the beans were dried, sorted, and bagged for market.

Dodge observed that “irrespective of what the law did to the African community, the law authorized the conscription of all able bodied persons for the harvest of European crops. Any African who opposed the government was immediately arrested and sent to St. Thomas Island to work indefinitely on the cocoa plantations, often for life.”⁷¹ These conscription labor laws greatly affected the work at Mafuque mission station as many of the people who helped at the mission were forced to work on the coffee farms.

As time went on, Dodge began to increasingly resent Portuguese labor laws. On the one hand, Dodge was committed to the notion that Africans should be treated as equals. However, he was also cognizant not to upset the Portuguese authorities and risk deportation. Even in the rural areas and away from the main activity of Portuguese government interaction, Dodge could not escape what he viewed as the unfair practices of the Portuguese government and its subjugation of the people. Even in a remote place such as Mufuque, the laws were affecting both the work and his concern for the Angolan people. Later on, when he left Angola, Dodge stated that as a missionary working in Angola he had “suffered in silence with the people of Angola.”⁷²

Soon after the Annual Conference at Mucondo, the Dembos District Conference was held at Muzumbo, February 18-22, 1950. The district conference was attended by 150 delegates from the churches throughout the district. Rev. Klebsattel, District Superintendent of Malanje District, was invited as the guest speaker for the conference. The highlights of District Conference showed that the revival of 1937 was continuing to spread as witnessed by new church starts in areas of Bula, Tumba and Quipenene. In a letter home, the Dodges wrote about the enthusiasm that permeated from District Conference:

It is hard to say what were the outstanding reports at the district conference. Perhaps it was the telling about burning idols after mass conversions in the new Bula, Tumba or Quipenene areas where evangelists were first sent last July. Perhaps it was the report of a young single teacher who in a new village has enrolled over a hundred pupils in the first grade. Or perhaps it was the reports of tithing campaign which we launched. Pastors and laymen voted to give tithing a try and the results have been most satisfactory. One member gave had given \$40.00 in tithes during the recent coffee harvest. Another coffee farmer had given \$80.00 because of the general benefits of the Gospel to his community. We rejoice not only because the better financial condition of the various churches, but primarily because of the spiritual blessing which has come to those who taken a Divine Partner into all life's relationships.⁷³

Foreign Division Secretary for Africa

Following the completion of District Conference, Dodge drove to Luanda so Rev. Klebsattel could catch the train back to Malanje. In Luanda, Dodge was able to attend to business matters and some needed grocery shopping. Because the Dodges letters were first received at the Luanda Mission upon entering the country, Rev. Blake and Dodge had an understanding that all letters deemed urgent could be opened by Rev. Blake so that he could inform Dodge of any pressing news. As Dodge aimed to collect any letters that had accumulated for him and his family, Rev. Blake handed him a month's worth of accumulated letters that included one particular letter that had already been opened, in which Rev. Blake urged Dodge to immediately read. The letter from Dr. Smith stated:

Dear Ralph,

Dr. Raymond L. Archer has been elected bishop in Asia. I am inviting you to become the Foreign Division Secretary for Africa and Europe to replace him. If you accept this invitation, please close out your personal affairs and meet Dr. Archer in Algiers on March 15th. Be prepared to spend ten days in Europe getting acquainted with the work before proceeding to New York to take up office responsibility on April 1st. Bishop Booth approves this appointment. Please let me have your reply by return mail.

You and Eunice will find it hard, I realize, to leave the Dembos—especially when you had waited so long to get into just that kind of work. Thrilling as is that area, however, I do not believe it can rightly hold a man back from the much larger area of service represented by the needs of the three highly significant areas to which you are being called. As an Associate Secretary you will not only be administering the work in a major field of our church, but you will also have a part in determining the whole policy of Methodism in its foreign missionary enterprise.⁷⁴

The surprising letter undoubtedly shocked Dodge. He was satisfied by the work they were doing in the Dembos and throughout Angola. However, he had also learned from the time he was a home missionary in Mohall, North Dakota that answering God's call might include leaving an assignment where progress was beginning to take root. Flexibility was an important characteristic of the missionary and an important quality of any Methodist pastor. To go where one is called is part of the vows of ordination and commission. Dodge believed the missionary was called to adapt when higher plans were revealed.

Flexibility had been the theme of his ministry ever since he first arrived in Angola, when he thought he was going to Quessua and ended up in Luanda. It showed up again when he finally arrived in Quessua and became sick with malaria and had to be recommended for an early furlough. It returned when his furlough ended and was ready to return to Angola but was prevented to return because of the Second World War. And yet again, upon returning to Angola he thought he was going back to Quessua to teach at Bishop William Taylor Bible School but was assigned by Bishop Booth to go to Luanda. Furthermore, flexibility was the reality when he thought he had settled in Luanda, and was assigned to the Dembos to start a mission station. And finally, with just thirteen

months living among the Dembos and witnessing the growth of the work he had started there, he was being called to New York. The Dodges had become veterans of flexibility in how it relates to God's calling in life.

This new chapter, an assignment to be the Foreign Division Secretary for Africa and Europe was a tremendous honor, but also a significant responsibility as he was to oversee the mission program of the Methodist Church for all of Africa. Out of four hundred missionaries in Africa at the time, Dr. Smith had selected him for this great task. His selection was indeed a compliment and an important recognition of his work. It was also a privilege and an esteemed position where he could serve in a way that might better impact the philosophy of mission for the entire denomination.

With all of this in mind, Dodge wrestled with the decision as he was not quite ready to leave the Dembos. As in many decisions, Dodge wanted to Eunice before choosing his next move, but he knew if he were to drive back to Mufuque to consult Eunice, it would take time for him to respond. He recognized the urgency of a reply to Dr. Smith. That night, he stayed with the Blakes in the Luanda mission, the place where it all began for the Dodges in Angola. That night he prayed.

The next morning, as they were having breakfast, Rev. Blake weighed in on the subject saying to Dodge, "As much as we need you here on the field, I think you are more needed in New York. You know our situation here; you can do something to help us out."⁷⁵ It was true that after fourteen years as a missionary in Africa, Dodge had a full grasp of the problems that existed and could arise between the missionary abroad and the sponsoring organization at home. For as much as he loved the institution that sent him to

Africa he also loved his brothers and sisters in the mission field to where he was sent. After much prayer and deliberation, and after conferring with Rev. Blake, Dodge had come to the conviction that he could be of greater service to Africa in the new position as Foreign Division Secretary. Immediately, he sent by telegraph his acceptance to Dr. Smith.

After sending the cable, Dodge drove back to Mafuque and he gave Eunice the letter from Dr. Smith to read. Her response was, “Not New York City. We’re just getting our house built here.”⁷⁶ They talked over the new assignment and they began to see the advantages of moving back to New York. In any case they were ready for their second furlough. Edward Jr. was fourteen and they had planned for him to start high school in the United States upon the next furlough. To leave early would help Ed begin school.

Before they left, Dodge aimed to fulfill a promise to go hunting with his son. The next morning, as Eunice began to pack, Dodge, Edward, Rodrigues and some of the other men in the village went out hunting. That day, Edward bagged his first and only buffalo.⁷⁷

On March 5, 1950, while his family made final preparations to sail home, Dodge flew from Luanda to Algiers. It was his first time on an airplane. In Algeria he met with Dr. Archer, his predecessor who showed him the Methodist Mission station in Algeria. In Algeria, he quickly learned that cohesive Muslim influence made it very difficult to establish churches, much more so from the unofficial persecution of Roman Catholicism by the Portuguese in Angola. From Algiers they flew to Lisbon and also travelled to Geneva, and Brussels.

Eunice and the children sailed directly from Luanda to New York City on a Belgian cargo ship on March 20, and arrived on April 8, 1950. They were received there by Dodge, who had arrived home days earlier, and Eunice's parents. From there, they went to Little Valley and stayed with Eunice's parents until they were able to find accommodations near New York City.

Even though they had physically left the Dembos, they remained there in spirit. Their interests, prayers and expectations firmly stayed there. They desired to work among the Dembos and continue to nourish wonderful things that were happening there. Fortunately, they were confident that the Rodrigues would carry on the work as they had known the family to be capable and courageous. Above all Dodge had known the Rodrigues to be sincere and authentic Christians. For this reason they were confident that the Dembos were in good hands and would continue to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

Reverse culture shock

As Dodge and Eunice had experienced upon their first return to the United States from Angola in 1941, the family struggled to cope with the stark cultural and material differences in Angolan and American society. Reverse cultural shock can encompass psychological, cultural and emotional components when one reenters his or her home culture. People readapt their cultures differently and uniquely. Compared to Eunice, Dodge had more difficulties with adapting to life at home. It became so difficult for Dodge that he needed psychological therapy to help him transition.

In 1941 when they came to USA on furlough, Eunice had complained about the waste they found everywhere they went in America. But even by Angolan standards, at that time they had just come from the best scenario, the city of Luanda. This time, in 1950, it was quite different. Now they were coming from the poorest of the poor, the rural Dembo region, where the family lived in a stick-and-mud house and hunted buffaloes for meat. To compare such a lifestyle to the hustling cosmopolitan and financial capital of New York City was almost incomparable.

The family's first task was finding a suitable house to buy or rent. Colleagues at the Board of Missions offices located at 150 5th Avenue, New York City recommended that Dodge and his family look for accommodation in the New Jersey's suburb of Ridgewood, across the Hudson River. Even so, the Dodges were used to a low budget life. Most of the houses in Ridgewood cost between forty and fifty thousand dollars, a remarkable amount of money for Angolans, even many Americans. The price range shocked Dodge and Eunice so that they finally agreed that they could only afford a house in the range of twenty thousand dollars.

To their surprise, they found an agent who had a house in Ridgewood that had just come on the market for eighteen thousand, five hundred dollars. While it needed some renovations, it was livable and Eunice liked the fact that it suited the needs of the family. Upon negotiations, they agreed to buy the house with a long term mortgage and a small down payment. However, while they could afford the down payment, they were unable to also afford furniture for the house.

Fortunately, Dodge's father-in-law, Mr. Davis who was a banker agreed to help them to secure a loan from his bank to which he cosigned. They also got a cash loan for the down payment for the house that also allowed them to buy some furniture. While Dodge's new salary as Foreign Division Secretary for Europe and Africa was much higher than the salary he was getting as a missionary in Angola, the cost of living also increased. In the meantime they decided to postpone buying a car since their house was within walking distance of all the essential services they might need. However, they learned quickly that they had misjudged the American culture that they had come back into as the car was becoming essential for taking children to and from school, to go to church and to do other important children's activities.

On one particular day Dodge was asked if he and his son Edward Jr. wanted to visit West Point for a father/son event. He wanted Edward, who had grown up in Africa, to meet new friends his own age. When he was asked the question as to how many people he could take in his car, he became embarrassed when he realized everyone in Ridgewood owned a car. Later that day after returning home, he suggested to Eunice that they buy a car explaining to her, "America is a different land from the one we left in 1936. We are already indebted to many friends for carting our kids around."⁷⁸ Again it was Eunice's father, Mr. Davis who helped them by selling his ten year old Dodge to them after an agreed upon payment plan. They had a house and a car, but they now also had three loans.

In Angola, whenever Dodge had something weighing heavily on him or troubling him, he could work in his garden and grow vegetables. It was his important outlet for dealing with problematic issues such as his intermittent depression, something in which

Eunice was always helpful. However, adjusting to office routine and responsibilities, in addition to American culture and the financial strain of keeping up with the cost of living began to take its toll on Dodge.

Dr. Eugene Smith, who had known Dodge in Africa as relaxed and outgoing person began to notice Dodge's stress. As a trained psychologist, Dr. Smith asked if Dodge had any special pressures that needed some adjustment to bring relief. For Dodge, it was less about the work pressures and more about trying to adjust to modern city life. As a result, Dr. Smith referred Dodge to a psychologist that he was acquainted. Dodge was hesitant to agree to the offer but Dr. Smith gave him the address and phone number of the psychologist. Because he was an employee of the Board of Missions, there would be no costs involved for the first ten hours of service.

A few days after his conversation with Dr. Smith, Dodge asked his secretary, Anne Anderson, to make an appointment with the recommended psychologist. The office was merely a few blocks from his office on Fifth Avenue. At the first scheduled meeting, his consultant was a chain smoking psychologist in her early thirties. Nonetheless, she appeared to help Dodge. After about seven sessions the psychologist was confident that they had made headway, but Dodge requested for the sessions to continue. He writes,

In a sense I was reluctant to stop, for she had helped me see myself as a proud male with an exaggerated sense of personal obligation to provide for the family – a person who hated favors from anyone. But once I accepted the humiliating fact that I alone couldn't provide for my family under existing conditions, then the only thing was to admit my failure and make adjustments accordingly.⁷⁹

As Dodge continued to try and adjust, the children were better at adjusting to the way of life in Ridgewood. Edward Jr. now fourteen was registered in high school as a freshman. He secured a janitorial job at a local preschool. Lois, now twelve years of age, was registered to begin seventh grade. And Cliff, now eight, enrolled in third grade and even got a job delivering newspapers. When Eunice received a job in the city, they put Peggy in day care. She was four years old.

In order to get to work, Dodge took a train into New York City on weekdays. Because he was one of the five Foreign Division secretaries: Latin America, India, Southeast Asia, Japan-Korea- Philippines, and Africa-Europe, he was responsible for four hundred Methodist missionaries in Europe and Africa. He also participated in the training of new recruits to the African mission field. The work would require him to travel to Europe and Africa to meet with missionaries and church leaders to assess their needs and also to strengthen the ties between them and the Board. Some of these travels would require him to be away from New York up to six months at a time.

Life as Foreign Division Secretary

When he was a missionary in Angola, Dodge was only able to travel to other African countries when he attended the Africa Central Conference in 1948, held at Old Mutare in Zimbabwe. As Foreign Division Secretary for Africa and Europe, Dodge was able to visit many more African places than when he lived in Angola.

The experience allowed him to become more aware of the growing work of the Methodist Church in Africa from his job in New York than when he was on the ground in

Angola. As a result, he appreciated that his selection as Foreign Division Secretary for Europe-Africa was a recognition of his willingness to serve in Africa and his commitment to the mission of the Methodist Church in Africa.

His first visit to Africa as Foreign Division Secretary came in January 1951. He arrived in Luanda by way of Brazil. His visit to Angola was an opportunity for him to meet with his former colleagues. From there, he traveled Elisabethville in the Belgian Congo to visit other missionaries and to see Bishop Booth, who lived in Elisabethville.

At one mission station in the Congo, Dodge was taken into a classroom where he engaged with the students by asking them their career goals. Students raised their hands and named the careers such as a mechanic, teacher and builder. One student in particular said he wanted to become a pilot and another said he wanted to become a doctor to which a Belgian teacher said, “We Belgians are not prepared to train Congolese doctors.”⁸⁰ With such a statement, the teacher’s view profoundly affected Dodge for he later said about the day in that classroom:

For me, the teacher’s words were more than a statement of fact; it was a statement of colonial policy. It was futile for Congolese boys of that generation to dream extravagantly. Masons, carpenters, teachers, mechanics and tailors, yes, but there the lid dropped. The message was clear: Don’t dream wild dreams, boys! Keep them within reason, within established pattern.⁸¹

From Elisabethville, Dodge travelled into Central Congo where he was once again hit with malaria and had to be hospitalized. When he got better, Rev. John Wesley Shungu, whom Bishop Booth had appointed as the first African District Superintendent in Central Congo, took Dodge around his district on a motorcycle. During this visit

Dodge and Shungu became friends. From Central Congo, Dodge visited Zimbabwe and then went on to Egypt and later Israel. From Israel he visited Europe and then went back to America. Dodge's first travel outside the United States as Foreign Division secretary had lasted more than six months.

When Dodge finished his six month tour of duty in Africa and Europe, he arrived home only to find a television set in the living room. Clifford and Edward Jr. had convinced their mother to get a television. Since Clifford was always going to their neighbors' house to watch television, and in many cases he had to be called for dinner from their neighbors' home, Eunice reluctantly agreed, at Edward Jr.'s plea, to buy a television for the household.

Eunice and Edward Jr. had gone to a grocery store and Ed found out that the store had a promotional sale of television sets. The promotional deal would allow customers to get a TV and use it for a month. If they enjoyed it and wanted it they would buy it for \$99.00 or after a month they decided they did not need a TV they would return it to the store without any cost if the TV was not broken. Edward Jr. used the convincing sales pitch to sway his mother into buying the television. He knew that after a month of watching television, they would want to keep it.

However, arriving home after six months abroad, Dodge was not too happy to see a television set in his living room. He thought it was a terrible idea that the children had convinced their mother to get a TV. Furthermore, he thought that the family did not have the money to buy a television set in the first place. The following day Dodge returned the TV. The children were disappointed and Clifford went back to the neighbors' house to

watch television. Again, Eunice was uncomfortable about Clifford going to their neighbors every day to watch TV. So finally, Dodge gave in and he bought a new TV to keep Clifford at home and appease Eunice.

By the time Dodge became the Foreign Division secretary for Africa-Europe, a few African Methodist pastors and lay leaders were beginning to visit America to promote the work of the church in their home countries. Where such visits were arranged by the Board on Missions usually these African leaders were welcomed and sometimes hosted by Dodge. One such leader who visited America in 1952 was Rev. John Wesley Shungu, his friend from the Congo. He stayed with the Dodges and they cemented a friendship that had started the previous year on the motorcycle. The friendship would later lead Shungu to Asbury Theological Seminary where he became the first African student to enroll at Asbury.

There were also a few African students in America who were being sponsored by the Board of Missions. His position as Foreign Division secretary for Africa enabled him to cast a vision for young Africans especially in the area of education. The position gave him authority to influence the Board of Missions to commit more funding and resources to educate young Africans. In their family's Thanksgiving Newsletter Dodge wrote;

These are the days of opportunity for the Church in Africa. No single opportunity is more important than that of training Christian leaders for the years ahead. Major adjustment must be made and Christian statesmen of tomorrow will come from the current student generation. Our missionary program must help carefully select students to get the education that they will need for the heavy responsibility which will inevitably be theirs.⁸²

As Foreign Division secretary for Africa and Europe, Dodge had the rewarding experiences of having access to and contact with bishops and other high profile leaders of the Methodist Church. He was always invited to participate in national or international meetings. His exposure not only to denominational issues but also ecumenical ones increased as he became someone who was well informed.

At home the children had settled relatively well. In 1955, Edward Jr. graduated from high school and started college at Taylor University in the fall of the same year. With a good job and the respect that came with it, Dodge felt that the position of foreign secretary was not something God wanted him to do for the rest of his life. He had been and remained a man of flexibility as he continued to pursue and discern God's calling. However, in 1955 when he was recommended for the ecumenical position to be the Executive Secretary of Foreign Missions Conference of North America, Dodge declined the offer.



1955 Family Portrait in Ridgewood, New Jersey. From left: Peggy, Ralph, Lois, Eunice, Clifford & Edward.

In 1955 while Dodge was leading a training program for young college graduates at Scarritt College in Nashville, Tennessee who were being recruited by the Board of Missions for a three year term of missionary work in various parts of Africa, Dodge invited Eduardo Mondlane, a Mozambican student at Northwestern University to speak at the orientation program. Dodge had known Eduardo in Africa and had also heard him speak in Chicago at the Methodist Women's Assembly. While in Nashville on a Sunday morning, Dodge invited Eduardo to join him to a Methodist Church in downtown Nashville for worship.

The reason Dodge wanted to worship at this church was because the associate pastor at the church had applied to be a missionary to Africa and Dodge thought it would be a good thing to worship at his church and introduce him to an African student. They arrived at the church just before worship started. As the church was called to stand to sing

a congregational hymn, an usher came down the aisle and motioned to Eduardo to follow him. Dodge followed too. The usher informed Eduardo that the church did not have an integrated worship and asked him to leave. Dodge said about the incident, “I glanced at Eduardo’s face. There was no anger. What I saw was an expression of half-bewilderment, half amusement. Taking him by the arm, I said, ‘Let’s go.’”⁸³ This experience with Eduardo in Nashville showed the struggles of the church in the South to be racially inclusive in the 1950s. However, the incident strengthened Dodge’s relationship with Eduardo who later became a leading figure to fight for independence in Mozambique.

In April 1956, Dodge attended the General Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Two important petitions on Africa which Dodge had helped to write were approved by the General Conference. Supervising the growing Methodist work in Africa was increasingly becoming impossible for one bishop to cover an area almost as big as the United States. The petition to create a second episcopal area was approved overwhelmingly. The second petition to allow the Africa Central Conference to elect its own bishops was also approved. Previously, all bishops; William Taylor (1884-1896), Joseph Crane Hartzell (1896-1916), Eben S. Springer (1917-1936) and Newell Snow Booth (1944-1964) were elected in the United States and assigned to Africa.

Dodge did not know that the petitions he had helped to write and the action of the General Conference would turn to direct him, his family and ministry to something he had never dreamed about. When he woke up in the morning of Saturday, October 13, 1956 he was the plain Rev. Dr. Ralph Edward Dodge, Foreign Division secretary in the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church and with no notion of leaving for Africa before 1959 at the earliest. However, by bedtime that Saturday evening, he was Bishop-

elect Dodge because early that Saturday morning he had received a cable from Elizabethville, Congo announcing that he had been elected as the second bishop of the Methodist Church to serve in Africa. Mrs. Dodge had begun packing his clothes and books and his papers so he would be ready to fly to Africa on Wednesday morning.

The Africa Central Conference meeting in Elizabethville, Congo acted on the resolutions of the General Conference. Dodge was elected overwhelmingly on the first ballot and Bishop Booth sent a cable to the bishop elect;

WELCOME COLLEGE BISHOPS AFRICA CENTRAL CONFERENCE ELECTED
FIRST BALLOT DESIRE YOU TO BE AT CONSECRATION SERVICE 21ST WITH
EUNICE IF POSSIBLE. BOOTH

The Bishop-elect responded to the Bishop Booth's cable;

GLADLY ACCEPT CALL TO RETURN HOME TO AFRICA. RALPH ARRIVES
ELISABETHVILLE FLIGHT 525 FRIDAY 3:00 P.M. EUNICE AND CHILDREN
FOLLOW LATER. CORDIAL GREETINGS. EUNICE-RALPH.

Dodge had Monday and Tuesday to finish the work at the office. On Sunday evening Dodge called Edward Jr. who was at Taylor University and Lois at Carleton College in Minnesota to inform them about the new developments. They congratulated their father on his election and wished him well on this new chapter of his life. He also called his mother in Iowa to inform her that he was returning to Africa as bishop-elect. Mrs. Dodge, Clifford and Peggy were to follow in January after spending Christmas with all the children. She would make arrangements to sell the house and ship all that was needed for their home in Africa. On Wednesday, October 17, 1956, Dodge flew out of New York to Africa to begin yet another exciting journey in his life as a bishop in the Methodist Church.

Notes

- ¹ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop* (Tucson: Wheatmark, 1986), 25.
- ² Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 144.
- ³ Lawrence W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola: A River of many Currents* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1992), 47.
- ⁴ The Methodist Episcopal Church came to Africa through an American settlement program for some freed slaves beginning in 1822. Among the first freed slaves who settled in Liberia was a group of Methodists with a lay preacher, Daniel Coker, who organized the Methodists into a society. Therefore, Daniel Coker is regarded as the founder of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Liberia and Africa in general. The first missionary assigned to Liberia in 1833 was Melville Cox who died of malaria four months after his arrival. A number of missionaries volunteered to continue Cox's work in Liberia. After sixty years of Methodism in Liberia, a petition from Liberia Conference was presented at the 1884 General Conference in Philadelphia asking for a missionary bishop who would reside in Africa. The request was received and approved with reluctance, and William Taylor was elected and consecrated as the first missionary bishop to Africa.
- ⁵ Ralph E. Diffendorfer, Paul Hutchinson, eds., *The World Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Chicago: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), 113.
- ⁶ Kurewa John W.Z., *The Church in Mission: A Short History of the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, 1897-1997* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 19.
- ⁷ Ralph E. Diffendorfer, Paul Hutchinson, eds., *The World Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Chicago: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), 118.
- ⁸ Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, 51.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ William Taylor, *The Flaming Torch in Darkest Africa* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1898), 6.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid., 456.
- ¹³ Ralph E. Dodge, *Missions and Anthropology: A program of Anthropological Research for Missionaries Working Among the Bantu Speaking Peoples of Central and Southern Africa* (PhD. Diss., Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1944), 173.
- ¹⁴ Dodge, *The Pagan Church*, 90.
- ¹⁵ Ralph E. Dodge, "Oneness of Humanity," *Africa Central Journal*, 1960, 11.
- ¹⁶ Denys W.T Shropshire, *The Church and Primitive People* (London: MacMillan Company, 1938), Xii.
- ¹⁷ Diffendorfer, *The World Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 115.
- ¹⁸ Ralph Edward Dodge, *The Pagan Church: The Protestant Failure in America* (New York: J.B Lippincott Company, 1968), 31.
- ¹⁹ Dodge, *Missions and Anthropology*, 22.
- ²⁰ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 18.
- ²¹ Dodge, *Missions and Anthropology*, 5.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid., 6.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 19
- ²⁶ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 17.
- ²⁷ Dodge, *Missions and Anthropology*, 14.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 86
- ²⁹ Ibid., 27
- ³⁰ Ibid., 85
- ³¹ Ibid., 96.
- ³² Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 93.
- ³³ Dodge, *Missions and Anthropology*, 162.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 167.
- ³⁵ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 70.

- ³⁶ Ralph E. Dodge, "Angola and Protestant Conscience," *The Christian Century*, November 22/ 1961, 1395.
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- ³⁸ "The Treaty of Berlin 1885," Blackpast.Org, <http://www.blackpast.org/?q=treaty-berlin-1885> (accessed December 12, 2016).
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- ⁴⁰ Dodge, "Angola and the Protestant Conscience," *The Christian Century*, November 22/1961, 1397.
- ⁴¹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 72.
- ⁴² Dodge, "Angola and the Protestant Conscience," *The Christian Century*, November 22/1961, 1396.
- ⁴³ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 72.
- ⁴⁴ Jose Julio Goncalves, *Protestantismo em África* (Lisbon: Lisboa, 1960), 88.
- ⁴⁵ Ralph Edward Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary*, (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1964), 19.
- ⁴⁶ Dodge, "Angola and the Protestant Conscience," *The Christian Century*, November 22/1961, 1396.
- ⁴⁷ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, "Africa Letter," December 17, 1945.
- ⁴⁸ Dodge, "Angola and the Protestant Conscience," *The Christian Century*, November 22/1961, 1396.
- ⁴⁹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 73.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 74.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 77.
- ⁵² Dodge, *Missions and Anthropology*, 166.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 80.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Barbara H. Lewis, *The Methodist Overseas Missions*, 7.
- ⁵⁶ Dodge, *Missions and Anthropology*, 83.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Zimbabwe was colonized by the British in 1890 with the leadership of Cecil John Rhodes and the country was named Rhodesia, after Rhodes. After gaining independence in 1980 the country was renamed Zimbabwe.
- ⁵⁹ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, "Africa Letter," November 30, 1948.
- ⁶⁰ Interview with Edward Dodge Jr. Personal Interview, May 14, 2014.
- ⁶¹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 88.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ Ibid., 90.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Interview with Edward Dodge Jr. Personal Interview, May 14, 2014.
- ⁶⁶ Eunice and Dodge, "Africa Letter," August 26, 1948.
- ⁶⁷ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 91.
- ⁶⁸ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, "Africa Letter," August, 1949.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Eugene Smith, Letter to Ralph Dodge, October 15, 1949.
- ⁷¹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 93.
- ⁷² Dodge, "Angola and the Protestant Conscience," *The Christian Century*, November 22/1961, 1396.
- ⁷³ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, "Africa Letter," March 4, 1950.
- ⁷⁴ Eugene Smith, Letter to Ralph Dodge, January 31, 1950.
- ⁷⁵ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 95.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 96.
- ⁷⁷ Interview with Edward Dodge Jr. Personal Interview, May 14, 2014.
- ⁷⁸ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 98.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 101.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid., 102.
- ⁸¹ Ralph Edward Dodge, "Keep an eye on Tomorrow," *Umboo*, July 1967.
- ⁸² Eunice and Ralph E. Dodge, Thanksgiving News Letter," 1954.
- ⁸³ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 106.

CHAPTER FOUR

LIFE OF A BISHOP IN AFRICA

The first election and consecration of a Methodist bishop in Africa

When the General Conference of the Methodist Church met in Minneapolis, Minnesota in May, 1956 granted the Africa Central Conference (Angola, Congo, Mozambique and Zimbabwe) the right to elect its own bishops, at the subsequent meeting of the Africa Central Conference in Elizabethville, Belgian Congo (now Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo – DRC) the selection of bishops would become the main highlight. With fifty-two registered delegates from five annual conferences, twenty-four of which were African delegates and twenty-eight of which were white missionaries, the Central Conference was about to make history by electing the first Methodist Bishop within the bounds of Africa.

The conference included a diversity of delegates from four different countries. Many different languages were represented, both of tribal and colonial descent. The largest delegation was from The Rhodesia Conference, which sent fourteen delegates (seven Africans and seven missionaries). The Angola Conference, where Dodge had gained most of his missionary experience, sent eight delegates (three Africans and five missionaries). In Congo, there were two separate delegations from the two annual conferences, Central Congo Conference (fourteen delegates - seven Africans and seven missionaries) and the Southern Congo Conference (eight delegates – three Africans and five missionaries). And finally, The Mozambique Conference (eight delegates - four

Africans and four missionaries) completed the total number of delegates to the African Central Conference.

As the body of delegates began to consider the prospect of new bishops, the Committee on Ministry, composed of twelve members (three Africans) provided a report that included a recommendation that “the Central Conference of the Elizabethville area, exercise the prerogative granted to us by the General Conference of 1956 of electing a bishop and that he be elected at this session.”¹ It was this committee that also recommended that nominations for the episcopacy be completed by ballot and that a two thirds majority of the votes of the seated delegates was necessary to constitute an election. In regards to the length of time a bishop could serve, the committee recommended that the bishop should be elected for a term of eight years with the possibility of re-election for life.

With the process and rules for election set, the committee turned its attention to other pertinent conference business. Highlights included: the acceptance of the Committee on Conferences’ recommendation to the creation of the Lourenco Marques Area (Maputo) which included the Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe conferences; the recommendation that the residence and offices of the bishop for the new episcopal area be established in Lourenco Marques, Mozambique or in Zimbabwe with priority being given to Mozambique (Maputo was preferred because there were regular flights between Maputo and Luanda, Angola and between Maputo and Harare).

Of course, most delegates eagerly awaited the opportunity to choose Africa’s first African elected bishop. With all the legislative ground work completed, the Conference

was ready to vote. Ballots for the nominations were cast on October 13, 1956. Results of the nomination sent a clear message: Rev. Algot Knutsson (1), Rev. Schioldborg Hassing (1), Rev. Marshall J. Murphree (1), Rev. S.U. Barbieri (2), Rev. Roy S. Smyres (4) and Rev. Dr. Ralph E. Dodge (40).¹

With the nomination of the election ballots cast, Bishop Newell Booth confirmed that thirty-four votes would be necessary to elect a bishop. When the conference set to filling-out the first ballot and the returns were counted, the results were made more emphatic than even the votes for nomination. The results were: Rev. Algot Knutsson (1), Rev. Schioldborg Hassing (1), Rev. Marshall J. Murphree (1), Rev. Roy S. Smyres (3), Rev. S.U. Barbieri (2), and Rev. Dr. Ralph E. Dodge (44).

Having received more than the required thirty-four votes needed for an election, Ralph E. Dodge was now a bishop in the Methodist Church. Almost immediately as the first ballot was confirmed, a telegram was urgently sent to Dodge with the approval of the conference: "Welcome college bishops Africa Central conference elected first ballot. Desire you be at Consecration Service 21st with Eunice if possible."²

Now that Dodge was made a bishop in the Methodist Church, it was now possible for him to be assigned to his respective episcopal area. On the fourth day of the Central Conference, on Monday, October 15, 1956, the Committee on Ministry gave a report that was approved which assigned the two bishops to their respective areas – Bishop-elect Ralph E. Dodge was assigned to the Lourenco Marques (Maputo) area in Mozambique and Bishop Newell Booth was assigned to the Elizabethville (Lubumbashi) area in the Congo.

¹ Three of the nomination ballots were invalid

The next day, Dodge's telegram was both received and read by Bishop Booth on the floor of the conference: "Gladly accept call to return home to Africa. Ralph arrives Elizabethville, flight 525 Friday 3:00 PM. Eunice and children follow later. Cordial greetings."³

When Dodge's flight touched down in Elizabethville on the scheduled time, after having gone through customs and immigration, he was welcomed at the airport by Bishop Booth and a delegation composed of selected delegates from Angola, Congo, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The next day, the new bishop elect Dodge, was able to preach to the morning session of the conference using Paul's letter to the Philippians 3:13-14.

For the past week, Dodge's life had been a whirlwind. A week before, he was a Foreign Division Secretary living in New York City. And now, just days later, with a trip across the Atlantic Ocean, he was preaching to the African Central Conference as their new and overwhelmingly approved bishop elect.

After his sermon concluded, Dodge was able to sit through the conference and contemplate it all. However, as the committee reports were presented, he was surprised to learn that his salary as bishop would be considerably different from that of his American colleagues. The contrast in pay was stark. Not only was his salary twenty-five percent above what he earned as a missionary in Angola, it was far below what he earned in New York as Foreign Division Secretary. Nevertheless, the ministry of serving God as a missionary in Africa had never been about pay for the Dodges. From a stick-in-the mud hut in rural Angola to a comfortable house in the suburbs of New Jersey, Dodge had

learned that ministry often meant that one must adapt. Such notion had been an important part of the missional philosophy of his dissertation.

In what *The Christian Advocate* reported on the morning of Sunday, October 21, 1956 as clear and warm, since it was now the last day of the African Central Conference, there remained only one last item of business. The conference would end with the consecration of the new bishop. Wallace Memorial Church was the venue for the consecration worship and ceremony. By 9:30 AM, the church was already overflowing with people who had come to worship and witness for the first time the consecration of a Methodist bishop in Africa.⁴ Bishop Arthur J. Moore of the Atlanta episcopal area would preach the consecration sermon on Exodus 14:15: "Tell the people of Israel to go forward." In a symbolic move, five elders, each from the different African annual conferences, were selected to assist in the consecration: Rev. Julio Miguel (Angola), Rev. Marshall Murphree (Zimbabwe), Rev. Joel Bulanga (Southern Congo), Rev. Gideon Jamella (Mozambique) and Rev. Alex Reid (Central Congo).

Bishop Booth and Bishop Moore, assisted by the five elders, consecrated Rev. Dr. Ralph Edward Dodge, former missionary to Angola and Foreign Division secretary for Europe and Africa of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church as bishop. Following the consecration and subsequent congratulatory remarks that included handshakes and hugs, Bishop Moore pronounced the benediction and thus brought to a close the historic third session of the Africa Central Conference.

The next day, October 22, newly elected Bishop Dodge flew to Mozambique by way of a connecting flight to Harare, Zimbabwe. The Central Conference had

recommended that the episcopal residence be in Maputo, Mozambique's capital. However, in order to reside and work in Mozambique, Dodge would need to obtain a residence permit. Portuguese immigration officials required Dodge to not only submit birth certificates for all of his family members, but furthermore, he would need to show Eunice's college diplomas along with the couple's marriage certificate. More so, all documents were required to be translated into Portuguese and notarized. Because the documents were in United States with Eunice, she worked to get the documents translated, notarized and submitted them with the application to the Portuguese consulate in New York.

Unlike Luanda, Angola's capital city in, with a population of approximately 174,000 in 1955, Maputo was slightly smaller with a population of approximately 129,000. However, there were many similarities between the two cities. Although they were on opposite ends of the continent, both capitals were located next to an ocean. Moreover, as Portuguese colonial capitals, Dodge was already used to how slow Portuguese officials processed documents especially those related to Protestant missionaries. Because the process might take quite a while, Dodge initially looked to secure proper housing, but eventually decided to wait until his application for permanent residency was approved by the government. In the meantime, he traveled back to Zimbabwe.

While in Zimbabwe's eastern city of Mutare, Dodge discovered that the conference evangelist, Rev. Dr. Marshall J. Murphree, who was based in Rusape, a town on the road connecting Mutare with Harare, was planning to begin a furlough. Murphree had been one of the nominees with Dodge for the episcopacy, but he was delighted to

allow his new bishop and family the opportunity to stay in his home while they waited for the approval of their residence permit for Mozambique.

As a result, Dodge moved to Rusape to begin his episcopal duties. One of his first requests was to keep Rev. Schioldborg Hassing as the administrative assistant for the bishop's office. Hassing (1916-2005), a missionary from Sweden, had served as Bishop Booth's administrative assistant in Zimbabwe. Like Murphree, he too had been nominated to the episcopacy at Central Conference.

Yet Dodge would also need to employ a secretary or personal assistant to work in his office. The office budget included a salary for a secretary and assumed that the bishop's secretary would be European or a missionary's wife. Dodge immediately sent word to the District Superintendents about his need for a secretary, emphasizing a preference for a candidate fluent in English and Portuguese.

William James Humbane, a high school student from Mozambique at Old Mutare, was sitting in church at on a Sunday morning when the announcement was made for a secretary for the bishop. Humbane inquired about the position by learning that Bishop Dodge was staying at a hotel in Mutare. On that same Sunday afternoon, he borrowed a bicycle from a friend and rode eleven miles to the place where Dodge was staying at the Manica Hotel.

Soaked in sweat from riding his bicycle on a hot Zimbabwean afternoon, Humbane met with the bishop about the secretarial position. As the two spoke, Humbane would switch back-and-forth from English to Portuguese, hoping to impress on the bishop his fluency in both languages. When Dodge asked the nervous Humbane if he

could type, the young man replied that he could not. When the bishop asked him if he could drive, Humbane regretfully answered the same. However, when the bishop asked if he could speak other languages, Humbane replied, “[Indeed], Tswa and Shona. I am from Mozambique and Tswa is my first language. Then I learned Portuguese as a boy. After I finished primary school at home, I came to Old Umtali to do high school. I have learned English as well as Shona at Old Umtali.”⁵

With the interview complete, Dodge hired William James Humbane to be his personal secretary. While it was a rarity for males to be hired as secretaries, a position usually reserved for women, Humbane would serve as Bishop Dodge’s personal assistant and driver for ten years. As Dodge writes about the young, but impressive Humbane saying, “He was willing to do anything to get a job, willing even to forgo the Christmas holidays at home in Mozambique. He did not even ask about his salary.”⁶

When Humbane graduated from the high school in Old Mutare in December of 1956, Dodge sent him to Harare to learn how to drive and to take a crash course in typing. Even after taking the course, it would be Eunice who would train William to be a better secretary and typist. She and Dodge would give Humbane opportunities to learn on the job. Eunice writes,

It would be much faster to type all the letters myself at this stage, but he will never get to be a real help if I don’t take time now to train. He had only a few lessons in typing, so it seems like asking the impossible for him to become an efficient secretary. Yet, both Ralph and I have hopes for him. He is slow, yet, but he does not need to have a thing told him twice, and that is something very important!⁷

With the important positions of his office hired, Dodge spent the Christmas of 1956 in Angola with the Blake family as he awaited a response from the officials in Mozambique concerning his residence permit. More importantly, he eagerly awaited the arrival of Eunice and the two children, Clifford and Peggy, who were scheduled to arrive in Luanda in January. During his brief stay in Angola, Dodge took advantage of conducting meetings with key leaders of the Angola Conference. The visit also allowed him the privilege to visit the Mafuque mission station and check its progress. When Dodge's family finally arrived in Luanda, it was not long before they all would fly to Harare and then proceed to their temporary home in Rusape.

Ralph and Eunice decided to register Clifford, who was now fifteen, at the Umtali Boys High School in Mutare as a boarding student. Since they were only temporarily living in Rusape, they decided that Peggy would go to a local primary school, but later they would enroll her at a boarding school as their travel itineraries would require them to be away for many days and she would need proper care.

To assist his travels in Zimbabwe, Dodge was able to secure a temporary vehicle through Marcia Ball, a missionary who was serving at the Hilltop Christian Youth Center in Sakubva, Mutare, but who was preparing to leave on a furlough. Arriving in Zimbabwe at a time when two missionaries were headed on furloughs had helped Dodge easily secure a house and now a vehicle.

Dodge was unsure as to how long his stay in Zimbabwe might last. Just as he predicted, the application process for the residence permit in Mozambique was moving at

a snail's pace. In Eunice's letter to the family, dated 14 February, 1957 the Dodges were beginning to consider the prospects of having to live permanently in Zimbabwe:

We have been granted a permit to stay permanently in Southern Rhodesia. And a letter from New York says that they are still working on our documents to send to L. M. My birth certificate and Cliff's were rejected by the Portuguese Consul in N.Y.C because they did not tell enough! Blanks had to be sent out here to us to sign and return to the Board, and then they had to get better certificates, have them translated into Portuguese, etc. It's a process! We shall probably know the result by November so we can be settled in a permanent home by next Christmas. As soon as we know definitely where we are going to live, we shall send for our trunks, now stored in New York. Trying to administer a vast and varied area like this from a suitcase presents its problems!

Personally, we would enjoy living in Southern Rhodesia. Rusape is a nice little town with rather few interruptions. The climate is wonderful here. We have electricity – 220 volts. We have purified running water which we do not have to boil. We have a telephone. We happen to live on a completely paved street.⁸

The bishop's first meeting with the pastors in the Rhodesia Conference was at the pastors' school which was held at the historic Old Mutare in the first two weeks of February. Dodge had first visited Old Mutare in 1948 when he attended the Africa Central Conference as a delegate from Angola. As Foreign Division secretary he visited Old Mutare again for the opening and dedication of the Ehnes Memorial Church which was sponsored by the Board of Missions. Because Old Mutare is a place of great significance in Dodge's ministry in Zimbabwe and it also where his family would decide to scatter his ashes it is important to tell its story.

Brief history of Old Mutare

Old Mutare is the first Methodist mission center to be established in Zimbabwe in 1897. The center initially started as Umtali town. After only four years, Cecil Rhodes decided to move the town to the present location because it was costly to construct the Beira-Harare railway through it because of the mountains. Rhodes decided to move the town to the railway. So, in December, 1897, when Bishop Joseph Crane Hartzell arrived in the new Mutare, he learned of the abandoned town. The question that was being asked concerning the abandoned town was, “What can be done with it?”⁹ It is reported that Rhodes had replied, “Make a mission of it.”¹⁰ Having been told what Rhodes had said about the abandoned town, Bishop Hartzell scheduled a meeting with Rhodes from which he secured the abandoned town sitting on 14,800 acres of land for \$50,000 - hence the name Old Mutare.¹¹ Old Mutare became the most developed Methodist center in Africa. The British South Africa Company which was the administrative authority of Rhodesia at the time turned over the whole abandoned town to Bishop Hartzell. “The jail became a school, the courthouse a hospital, stores became residences, office buildings dormitories, the straight unshaded streets have place to winding roads and trees and flowers were encouraged to grow in profusion.”¹²



Old Mutare town in 1894.

Picture courtesy of Africa University Archives center

When Dodge arrived at Old Mutare for the pastors' school, the center consisted of a hospital, boarding high school, primary school, theological seminary, teacher's training college, native agriculture school, printing press and an orphanage. Today, Africa University, the only United Methodist sponsored university is located at Old Mutare.

As a new bishop, Dodge received a warm reception from his ministers at Old Mutare. Furthermore, the fact that the bishop was residing in Zimbabwe, albeit only for a little while, gave the pastors a sense of pride and encouragement. For most of the pastors, this was their first opportunity to meet the new bishop. For Dodge, it was an opportunity to address all of his Zimbabwean pastors for the first time since many were also gathered

at Old Mutare for a pastors' school. The new bishop made a remarkable impression on the pastors.

Rev. Abel Tendekayi Muzorewa, a thirty-two year old pastor of Chiduku North Circuit near Rusape was one of those who liked what Bishop Dodge had to say at the pastors' school. What impressed Muzorewa the most was Bishop Dodge's vision for the church; one that sought to build a better relationship between the pastors in the conference and the episcopal office. In his book *Rise Up and Walk*, Muzorewa writes,

As he spoke [Dodge] to the pastors he said, "I would like to visit all of you, my brothers, in your circuits and get to know the people and the Church well. I will not carry any food when I come to visit you. I will come and stay with you in your homes, wherever you are. I know this is the African custom, and we will observe it. Such action was a radical break from the past, for missionaries had always stayed in special 'missionary guest houses' and carried with them their own bedding, food and a cook to prepare it."¹³

Following the pastors' school at Old Mutare was the Mutasa - Makoni District Conference, held in Rusape. Since the Dodges lived in Rusape, it was convenient for both he and Eunice to attend the conference. Rev. Ovid Stine, the District Superintendent, presided over the event. Introducing Dodge to the conference, Stine asked him to address the event. From prepared remarks, with Rev. Stine translating into Shona, Dodge shared the following:

Mrs. Dodge and I are delighted to be back in Africa and to be headquartered, at least temporarily, in Southern Rhodesia. My first task is to get acquainted with you pastors and lay persons and to learn about the work which you are doing. Having been a missionary in Angola, I know something of the work pattern there. From the very beginning I want you to understand that we are workers together and, through Jesus Christ our Savior, our togetherness is centered in God's church... Are there those here on this district conference who would like to invite me to spend a weekend with you in your parishes?¹⁴

Muzorewa, who had been captivated by the Bishop's address to the pastor's school, was also present for the district conference. He was the first to approach Dodge following his speech and invited him to visit his churches in the Chiduku North Circuit. It was a large circuit, with sixteen local churches and preaching stations. Dodge accepted the invitation and he and Muzorewa scheduled a weekend in early April for Dodge's visit. Muzorewa and his wife Maggie whom he said "was an excellent cook"¹⁵ would go on to host Dodge in their small parsonage at Muziti.

When Dodge arrived at Muziti, he was welcomed by Rev. Muzorewa, his wife and three young boys. Together, Dodge and Muzorewa visited seven local churches on Friday and Saturday, returning to Muziti in the evening. The visit concluded on Sunday with a large evangelism rally, also attended by District Superintendent Stine, as well as Eunice and Peggy.

The visit to churches in Chiduku North Circuit had been important for several reasons. Mainly, it helped Dodge understand both the challenges and opportunities of rural ministry in Zimbabwe. Dodge saw that African pastors in rural areas had to carry a heavy load, sometimes serving many local churches at once, which in turn, affected how

they could minister to them. For many pastors like Muzorewa, whose mode of transportation was nothing more than a bicycle, Dodge saw firsthand the important need for more pastors to reduce the sizes of the geographically large, rural circuits

The visit also allowed Muzorewa, who was excited to have the bishop visit his charge and to stay with his family, an opportunity to know Dodge on a more personal level. The time spent together gave Muzorewa a unique opportunity to build a relationship and trust with Dodge. It provided him an opportunity to discuss political and racial issues that troubled him as a preacher in Zimbabwe. For Muzorewa, who had joined the Youth League, a political activist group formed in 1956 by Edson Sithole, there were many issues to discuss. It was the Youth League that sought among other things to fight discrimination laws in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

Before Dodge's visit, Muzorewa attended a political discussion at the Anglican Church's St. Faith's Mission near Rusape. At the meeting, a man by the name of Winston Field, who belonged to an all-white Dominion Party and would later become Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia in 1962, had said something that greatly troubled Muzorewa. Muzorewa writes:

I do not remember all that Mr. Winston Field said that night. Burned indelibly in my memory, however, was his statement, 'I do not believe that an African will go to heaven.' I could scarcely believe my ears as he said that an African is a sub-human being, that God would not accept the African as his child. 'Is he projecting a South Africa Dutch Reformed theology to support his racial arrogance?' I wondered. I grieved that any white person in our country would think like that, but was too hurt and humiliated to respond.¹⁶

Reeling from hurt and humiliation from what he had heard at St. Faith's mission, Muzorewa would engage Bishop Dodge during his stay with him in his home and as they visited the churches in his circuit. He eagerly sought his new bishop's beliefs in such matters. Indeed, his discussions with Dodge apparently left a strong impression for Muzorewa later writes, "I breathed a deep sigh of relief that my own bishop was fearless in opposing the white racists."¹⁷

Once again, just as it had happened in Angola, Dodge had proven to strengthen his credibility as a missionary and now a bishop by visiting with the people and listening to their needs. African pastors in Angola who had worked with Dodge as their district superintendent had always viewed him as their colleague. When they visited at his home they were always welcomed. But unlike in Angola, in Zimbabwe, Dodge was now a bishop. It was one of the most important and significant offices. It was an office where voices could not only be heard, but where leadership could change hearts. By visiting pastors and churches in the villages, the new bishop was setting a new tone not just for the pastors but for his superintendents. None of the four district superintendents in Zimbabwe, who were all white missionaries, had engaged the people by visiting them through in the kind of ways Bishop Dodge had. However, just how far was Dodge willing to go?



Bishop Ralph Edward Dodge in 1957

While Dodge was in Zimbabwe, he would quickly realize, that unlike Angola, Zimbabwe was a rigidly, racially segregated country with a dark cloud of political uncertainty gathering on the horizon. In towns like Harare and Bulawayo, protesters frequently gathered to contest policies of the British colonial government. Zimbabweans who had been recruited to fight in the Second World War were angry at the colonial government for its failure to reward them appropriately for fighting in the war. Furthermore, the economic boom that the country experienced after the war had only benefitted whites, while the standard of living of blacks had steadily deteriorated. To make matters worse, for the Zimbabweans who had fought side-by-side with whites during the war, they returned home to growing racial polarization in all aspects of life

with no “indication nor hope that the Africans would share in the affluence that had come partly as a result of their toil and suffering during the war.”¹⁸

With the 1952 election of Joshua Nkomo as president of the African National Congress (ANC), a political organization and pressure group that fought among other things to de-racialize the education system in Zimbabwe, many of the betrayed World War II African heroes readily joined the ANC with the hopes that their grievances would be addressed.

African nationalism in Zimbabwe

A few weeks before Bishop Dodge arrived in Zimbabwe in 1956, Edson Sithole, James Chikerema and George Nyandoro formed the Youth League in Harare by organizing a successful bus boycott of the government owned United Transport Company in resistance to the company’s increase to bus fares. Consequently, the boycott forced United Transport Company to reverse its decision to raise fares. The success of the boycott provided momentum for the newly formed Youth League, resulting in its subsequent demand for African majority rule. Leopold Takawira, a young African nationalist and a member of the Youth League would declare, “We are no longer asking whites to rule us well, we now want to rule ourselves.”¹⁹

Thus, the emerging African nationalism in Zimbabwe, which had found its roots in the revolutionary consequences of World War II, was beginning to change the political discourse in Zimbabwe. The notion of self-rule was a popular issue. Ghana’s Kwame Nkruma’s political homily, to “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things

shall be added unto you”²⁰ and the subsequent independence of Ghana in 1957 rallied the African National Congress² and the Youth League to begin talks of merging into one. Furthermore, Ghana’s independence in 1957 would add fuel to the quest of the national movements for independence throughout all of colonized Africa. In September of the same year, the Youth League and the African National Congress merged to become a political party called the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress.

To address the grievances of the ANC and the Youth League, Garfield Todd’s colonial administration offered a number of changes in hopes of placating the core of the movement. Todd (1908 – 2002), a New Zealander who had come to Zimbabwe in 1934 as a missionary of the Church of Christ, became Prime Minister in 1953.

Once in office, Todd spoke of a “racial partnership” in Zimbabwe, where his government was committed “to maintain, for the soundest of reasons, the standards of the European while at the same time we shall continue to help Africans and all others to rise as rapidly as possible to those standards which we employ.”²¹ Furthermore, the Prime Minister’s government amended the Land Apportionment Act of 1931 to allow hotels, clubs and restaurants the option to become multi-racial (however few did). This also would enable educated and professional Africans to occupy offices and premises in whites-only areas in order to conduct business, but it stopped short of allowing Africans to live in European areas.²² As the pace of reforms continued on at a slow pace, by 1956, Todd’s government deemed it applicable that, for the first time, educated and professional Africans could be referred to as Mr. or Mrs.²³ Furthermore, Todd’s government made legal for Africans to “drink European beer and wine but not spirits.”²⁴

² Joshua Nkomo’s ANC of 1952 must not be confused with Nelson Mandela’s ANC which was started in 1912.

However, as 1957 came, it was clear to many Africans that the racial partnership promised by the Todd government was merely a token gesture for only few educated Zimbabweans, and a “big pie in the sky” for the rest of Zimbabweans. ANC’s Joshua Nkomo made it clear that his people wanted more than just an opportunity to drink European beer or to be called “Mister”. They not only wanted full and equal recognition as a legitimate political party, but the right to vote for all Africans. Dodge writes,

A fire had been kindled. Could the prime minister keep the ANC under control? Nationalism spread rapidly and tensions grew. At that time I began a series of separate meetings with the prime minister and leaders of the African community... The flame of the African revolt was being fanned.²⁵

Still, Dodge believed that Todd and the leaders of the ANC could find a common ground, especially with Todd’s *Five Year Education Policy for the Africans*, recently introduced in the parliament.²⁶ Yet, even with the token changes that Todd introduced and attempted to address from the grievances of the Youth League and Africans in general, it was Todd’s party that proved to be a stumbling block for unity. They believed his reforms had been too generous for the Africans. This led to his removal as leader of the party and as Prime Minister in 1958.

Todd was succeeded by a more hardline leader, Edgar Whitehead, who upon being sworn in as prime minister, immediately ordered the arrest and detention of five hundred ANC leaders and members throughout the country. He followed up the arrests by banning the ANC.

In essence, with politics in Zimbabwe becoming ever more volatile by the day, the situation would require prophetic leadership from the new Methodist bishop. In Angola in 1940, Dodge had begun to articulate that racial practices that discriminated against Africans were a threat to evangelization. His position on racial discrimination and segregation as a threat to evangelization continued to grow stronger in Zimbabwe. Dodge soon discovered that unlike Angola or Mozambique, there were some young Zimbabweans, most of who were educated in mission schools, who strongly blamed the church and missionaries for the colonization of Zimbabwe.

When Dodge arrived in Zimbabwe in 1956, missionaries were already being subjected to severe criticism by some young nationalists who went as far as demanding that missionaries should go back to their home countries. Dodge writes,

Severe criticism of the church today comes from within. It comes from second generation Christians, and it comes with force and bitterness that is convincing. All is not well on the mission field. It is not unusual for new missionaries in Africa today to become disillusioned when they discover that the very people they come to serve regard them with suspicion... nor for veteran missionaries to retire early because of the “ingratitude” of their African charges. This criticism indicates that the church in Africa may become a healthy church, dissatisfied with the status quo and unhappy over past mistakes...²⁷

Second generation Christians in Zimbabwe were criticizing missionaries for two main reasons. Firstly, missionaries were viewed as explicit agents of colonialism and oppression. In many cases, missionaries were merely sent ahead by colonialists to negotiate with chiefs “and persuade them to sign treaties and concessions.”²⁸

In the case of Zimbabwe, some missionaries had colluded with colonialists to deceive tribal kings into giving away land and resources. For example, the Ndebele king, Lobengula, had been forced to sign falsely interpreted documents. Lobengula, who could neither read nor write, signed an “x” on treaties and concessions that justified colonial occupation of Zimbabwe. They were written in English, a language he did not understand.²⁹ Furthermore, African nationalism continued to give rise to an evaluation of the history of colonization as one that, as expressed by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana when he said:

The stage opens with the appearance of missionaries and anthropologists, traders, concessionaires and administrators. While the missionaries with “Christianity” implore the colonial subject to lay of “treasure in heaven where moth nor rust doth corrupt,” the traders, concessionaires acquire his mineral and land resources, destroy his arts, crafts and home industries.”³⁰

Another point of contention to the presence of missionaries was that they were accumulatively seen as promoting the notions of racial discrimination and segregation. Open association between missionaries and colonialists and “the linking of missionary work and imperialism acquired the unsavory odor”³¹ within emerging Zimbabwean nationalism. Missionaries were viewed as part of a political and economic agenda that benefitted a minority of Africans, while exploiting a majority of them. This was the kind of Zimbabwe Dodge had arrived. It was a time when African nationalism made it difficult to “think or discuss the racial segregation that existed in the country without significantly touching the missionary church”³²

Brief history of colonization of Zimbabwe

The history of the colonization of the African continent by European powers is a troubled one. Following the Berlin Conference of 1884, it was a matter of time before one of the European colonial powers would strike a claim on Zimbabwe. The British, who had already occupied South Africa, sent Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902) to organize and plan the occupation of Zimbabwe. The intent for the British was to create colonies spanning from Cape Town, South Africa to Cairo, Egypt. Rhodes was a young, ambitious businessman and imperialist who came to Cape Town in 1870 at the age of seventeen and worked to become a rich and powerful through diamonds. Rhodes' plan was to build a railway line from Cape Town to Cairo. Zimbabwe provided the land for this to happen. Furthermore, Rhodes wanted to explore diamond and gold mining rights in Zimbabwe. He would become a Member of Parliament and later Prime Minister of the British Cape Colony. Speaking to Parliament in 1887, Rhodes had reportedly said, "Treat the natives as subject people as long as they continue in a state of barbarism and communal tenure; be the lords over them, and let them be a subjected race, and keep liquor from them."³³

Before Rhodes' occupation and the advent of a colonial government, there were already British missionaries working and living in Zimbabwe. Specifically, three London Missionary Society's missionaries; Robert Moffat (1795-1883), his son John Moffat (1835-1918) and John Boden Thomson (1814 – 1878), had already laid a foundation of missionary activities in the country. The missionaries had established two mission stations at Inyati (1859) and Hope Fountain (1870). However, while the stations were operational, there existed a frustration among the missionaries for not having made a single convert at the sites. Lobengula, the Ndebele king, whose armies had dominated

and subdued the Shona tribal kings and chiefs in northern Zimbabwe had allowed the mission stations to be completed. However, Lobengula had also required that the two mission stations be established close to his capital so that he could better control the missionary's influence on either his own people or the Shona. According to Van der Merwe, "The Amandebele were afraid to declare acceptance of the Christian faith without having an indication that this would be met with the approval of the paramount chief."³⁴

As a result, Lobengula turned down requests by missionaries to establish more mission stations among the Ndebele and Shona people. Reports from the Inyati and Hope Fountain mission stations indicated that the missionaries had come to the conclusion that because the Ndebele king had too much power over his subjects and on all Shona people in Zimbabwe, any missionary success depended on the defeat and destruction of the Ndebele system of government. In other words, a colonizing power with a military supremacy would be welcomed by the missionaries and the church in hopes that it would subdue Lobengula and his armies in order to bring about the evangelization of Zimbabwe.

Knight-Bruce, a missionary with the Anglican Church, expressed the frustrations of many missionaries who wanted to work among the Shona but who viewed Lobengula as the key stumbling block. He writes, "We do not advocate the union of the rifle and the Bible, but we know the circumstances and feel confident that for all the parties concerned... the war will prove a blessing and not a curse."³⁵

Other missionaries like, Jesuit Fr. Peter Prestige, also supported colonization of Zimbabwe. He writes:

I trust the Matabele [Ndebele] kingdom will be smashed up. It was founded upon a basis of injustice – a powerful military organization set in motion for the self-aggrandizement of the king and his advisors at the expense of the denial and violation of the natural law to his subjects and his tributaries, who were deprived of security of life, security of property and the sanctity of family. The Matabele system of government was a system of iniquity and devilry... We must put down the Matabele and then go on with our work as if nothing happened.³⁶

What Father Peter Prestige was offering was a moral justification for a war against Lobengula and his state which had dominated the Shona kingdoms in the north. The Ndebele economy was based on military raids in these Shona kingdoms. In his book *The Bible, the Bullet, and the Ballot*, Fabulous Moyo states that “The wanton killings of the Shona by Ndebele armies and Lobengula’s heavy handedness and what seemed to be crude punishment given to offenders in his kingdom were cited as necessitating change of leadership.”³⁷ Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries were in agreement that Lobengula’s unchecked power on his subjects and over the Shonas prevented the acceptance of Christianity. Therefore, many missionaries found an ally in Rhodes for their success in evangelizing Zimbabwe.

With the support of the missionaries being on his side, Cecil Johns Rhodes sent his representatives, Charles Rudd, Rochfort Maquire and Robert Thompson to Lobengula to negotiate a treaty or concession in order to allow British settlers to come and settle in Zimbabwe. Rhodes’ men recruited John Moffat, whom Lobengula trusted as a friend, as

well as Charles Helm, who had taken over the work at the Hope Fountain mission station, to negotiate what is infamously known as the Rudd Concession. Earlier, in February 1888, John Moffat had negotiated with Lobengula on behalf of the British government at the Cape for British mining rights in kingdom.

Charles Helm falsely interpreted and explained the terms of the Concession to Lobengula, the chief signed the document with an “x” on October 30, 1888. While the full contents of the Rudd Concession are beyond the scope of this study, the document was monumental because it served as basis to which Queen Victoria granted Royal Charter in 1889 to Cecil John Rhodes and his British South Africa Company to invade and colonize Zimbabwe. Furthermore, it was the document that so many young nationalists would protest as illegitimate and call into question when Dodge was in Zimbabwe.

With the Charter approved, in 1890 the British South Africa Company (BSAC) crossed the Limpopo River from South Africa and occupied Zimbabwe with recruited settlers consisting of soldiers, artisans, miners, farmers, doctors and policemen to settle in Zimbabwe. In the Rudd Concession, the missionaries Charles Helm and John Moffat had given Lobengula the impression that only ten white men were coming to his country to mine gold and that he could provide his men as workers. To Lobengula’ unfortunate surprise, two hundred white settlers and five hundred BSAC soldiers and policemen poured into Zimbabwe from South Africa for permanent occupation “per agreement” from the Rudd Concession.³⁸

These early settlers were called the Pioneer Column, with each member given permission to select and mark out land ranging from three thousand to six thousand acres to be made into farms.³⁹ The Pioneer Column initially avoided territory inhabited by the Ndebele people and occupied land inhabited by the Shona people, choosing to establish a headquarters by the hill called *Harari*, meaning “place that never sleeps”. The settlers named the town Salisbury (After Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980 the city was renamed Harare)

Just as soon as the colonists poured into Zimbabwe, Lobengula frantically tried to undo the Rudd Concession. He asked Edward Arthur Maund (1851- 1932), a British explorer who was also interested in mining rights in Zimbabwe, if he could appeal the Rudd Concession to Queen Victoria in Britain. Lobengula sent two advisors with Maund to England where they were received by the Queen at the Windsor Castle. However, the advisors returned to Zimbabwe having failed to convince the Queen, who had already issued the Royal Charter to Rhodes.

In 1893, when Lobengula sent his army to raid some Shona people who lived at Fort Victoria (a town established by settlers), many Shona were killed. The event sparked what would be known as the Anglo-Ndebele War of October 1893. As a result, Lobengula and his armies were heavily defeated, opening the way for remaining occupation in Matabeleland.

The seizures of lands owned by the Shona and Ndebele people by the BSAC and the pioneer column became a “major source of conflict between the colonialists and the indigenous Africans”⁴⁰ because white settlers confiscated the fertile and arable lands for

farming while Africans were relocated or pushed to infertile and drier lands. In his book *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe*, Henry Moyana states, “Land was the most precious commodity among both the Shona and Ndebele; it was the foremost value in traditional society prior to the advent of colonial rule... the idea of private ownership of land introduced by the British South Africa Company was a conception incomprehensible to the Mashona and Matabele.”⁴¹

From the onset, the Rhodesian land policy was the cornerstone of racial segregation in Zimbabwe because it enforced a separation between white owned and African owned land. Africans were kept off white land, except to be used as workers, while African owned land was considered to be a reserve because whites could still claim portions of it when needed. In other words, Africans became known as squatters of the land in their country. But more importantly, Dodge observed that, “Land has great value for the African; without a piece of land, he feels insecure. It is probably the seizure of land by the European which has alienated the African from him and his religion as much as anything.”⁴²

Brief history of missions in Zimbabwe and the comity agreements

With the occupation of Zimbabwe in 1890 by the BSAC and the pioneer column, missionaries poured into Zimbabwe. Missionaries from all various churches and agencies came to Zimbabwe: The Roman Catholic Church (1890), Dutch Reformed Church (1891), Anglican Church (1891), Wesleyan Methodist Church (1891), Salvation Army (1892), American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1893), Seventh Day

Adventist Church (1894), the South Africa General Mission (1897), the Methodist Episcopal Church (December 10, 1897), Brethren in Christ Church (1898), Church of Christ (1898), Presbyterian Church (1898), African Methodist Episcopal Church (1900), Church of Sweden Mission (1903), Church of Central Africa – Presbyterian (1924), Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (1924) and the Free Methodist Church (1928). Only the London Missionary Society had long been in Zimbabwe since 1859.

Because John Moffat and Charles Helm were missionaries that had been so instrumental in negotiating the success of the Rudd Concession, missionary organizations and churches were heavily rewarded by being given more than 455,000 acres of land.⁴³ Most of it however was owned by fewer than eight powerful societies, among which were: the London Missionary Society, the British Wesleyan Methodist, the Lutheran Church of Sweden, Brethren in Christ, Anglican Church, Southern African Free Church of Scotland and later the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The churches and mission agencies flooding into Zimbabwe would form comity agreements in line with the recommendations of the Centenary Conference on Protestant Mission of the World held in 1888 in London. A comity was an ecumenical cooperation and fellowship of churches and mission agencies to distribute their personnel and resources to specific geographical areas in a country to avoid competition and theological differences which would cause confusion among the targeted groups. Comity agreements meant that “mission organizations or churches were allocated different areas in which to work... with mutual division of territory into spheres of occupation, on the one hand, and the non-interference in another’s affairs, on the other hand.”⁴⁴

In 1904, the Interdenominational Missionary Conference of Southern Rhodesia, (Zimbabwe) which brought together all missionaries working in the country, “agreed not to overlap their work with one another geographically.”⁴⁵ It meant that each church or mission agency was allocated a certain geographical area to evangelize. The Methodist Church focused its work in the eastern region to cover Manicaland and Mashonaland East provinces. However, by and large the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe was a rural church. The Wesleyan Methodists and the Methodist Episcopal Church agreed to provide spiritual and pastoral care for each other’s members if they happened to be in each other’s area as per the comity agreements.

Dodge arrived in Zimbabwe at a time when Africans were migrating in large numbers from rural areas to cities and towns such as Harare and Bulawayo. The rural-urban migration had started in the 1930s but the economic boom in the cities after World War II accelerated the migrations. Both Harare and Bulawayo happened to be in the areas where the Wesleyan Methodist Church had its work. Thus, the Methodists who moved from the rural areas to Harare and Bulawayo were encouraged to attend Wesleyan Methodist churches. Such members would begin to ask permission to meet on their own and request pastors from their own denomination, the Methodist Church. For many years, their requests at annual conferences were turned down as the church respected the comity agreements.

However, an attempt was made in 1946 by the Methodist Church to appoint a pastor, Rev. Josiah Chimbadzwa, to work under the Wesleyan Methodist Church in order to care for the Methodist Church groups that were scattered in the townships of Harare. Later, Rev. Chimbadzwa was moved and appointed to Old Mutare leaving the Methodist

groups without a pastor but under the care of Wesleyan Methodist pastors. The Methodists Church members continued to pressure the conference to supply them their own pastor. Each time the issue was brought, the conference's decision was to honor the comity agreements. Consequently, a Methodist local preacher, Solomon Chada Machingura, convinced a large number of Methodists in Harare to break away from the Methodist Church. He started the African Independent Methodist Church, commonly known as *Mushakata* because they were meeting for worship under a tree called *Mushakata* (the botanical name for this tree is *parinari curatellifolia*).

It was obvious that the cities and mining towns had opened new opportunities for evangelization. The Methodist Church would not allow itself to continue to lose members because of comity agreements, which benefitted denominations working in those areas while there was no movement from the urban to rural areas.

Dodge would have to decide whether the Methodist Church would continue as a regional and rural church, tied to the comity agreements, or whether it would become a more national church that started new congregations in cities and towns that were far away from eastern provinces of Zimbabwe. Though the Methodist Church's response to the breakaway was a slow one, Dodge would go on to appoint a pastor to Harare to start organizing a Methodist congregation. By 1958, the Methodist Church had secured a place in Harare Township (now Mbare) and built a church (now St. Paul's United Methodist Church).

Efforts to make the Methodist Church an indigenous church

The issues of race, land, segregation, comity, and African nationalism in Zimbabwe provided a framework for the situation in which Dodge began to work. It provided the basis for his direction for the Methodist Church. He knew that his successes and failures as the Methodist bishop in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe would be assessed by how he rallied the church to respond to the pressing issues that the church was facing in each country, whether it was the Portuguese or British colonial governments. Just like his first visit of the rural churches in the Chiduku North Circuit where he was engaged by Muzorewa on racial issues, Dodge was to face these issues in all of the places he traveled throughout Zimbabwe.

To address so many complex issues, Dodge narrowed the focus down to one main problem. He realized that in the context of Zimbabwean colonial politics, race was the fundamental criterion of determining what kind of employment opportunity was available, where and how one lived, the kind of school one sent one's children to, the kind of education they received, whether one was allowed to claim the right to vote or not, the kind of transportation one used, and the nature of relationship one had with other people. Race had become the only issue in politics that all human interactions were structured around.

In addressing the avalanche of criticism directed on missionaries, Dodge was compelled to respond. But how would he respond exactly? Missionaries generally responded to the criticism in three ways. There were those who in the face of such criticisms from the second generation African Christians concluded that these young

Africans were being led away from the church by a plethora of evil forces. They blamed nationalism, education and communism.

Some missionaries responded to the criticism by accepting some blame for past mistakes as being active participants of colonization. To this group of missionaries, the criticism was understandable only as a political phenomenon. Their response was to ignore the criticisms and continue to preach the good news of Jesus Christ. These missionaries argued that it was unfair for the mistakes of the past to be given more attention than the good things the missionaries had done for the African people.

Then there were missionaries like Dodge who listened to the criticism in the hope that the past mistakes could be corrected and prevented from being repeated. Dodge was of the opinion that missionaries were human beings who were prone to make mistakes. He accepted the criticism as a healthy sign for both the missionaries and the Africans because he so strongly believed that “the church of Christ in Africa will not be built by foreign missionaries. It will be built by Christ... when African Christians are a body under Christ, rather than under a foreign Board of Missions.”⁴⁶

Apart from the visits that he had planned to select churches in the four districts in Zimbabwe, Dodge began to directly preside over his first annual conferences in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola. From April 23-29, 1957, he led his first annual conference in Zimbabwe at Old Mutare mission center. This would be his second visit to Old Mutare, as in February, he had attended the pastors’ school and impressed many pastors.

Now in April, presiding over his first annual conference, Dodge symbolically showed to the conference leadership, missionaries and Zimbabweans the kind of a leader he wanted to be for them. Thus, the most important thing to come out of the annual conference at Old Mutare was not what was discussed on the conference floor. Rather, it was something Dodge did at the student dining hall and on the bus to go and dedicate a finished church at a nearby village.

Previously, at other annual conference gatherings in Zimbabwe, missionaries and African delegates ate their meals in separate dining-rooms. Furthermore, the meals were prepared differently. On the first day of the conference, when the conference took a break for dinner, African delegates lining at the student dining hall to get their food were surprised to see the bishop and his wife coming to join them. At first they thought that since it was his first time, the bishop wanted to greet people, but they were even more surprised to see the two standing in line waiting for food. It left a strong impression on many to see their new bishop leaving the designated missionary dining place to come and eat with them.

William Humbane, who was with Dodge and Eunice, remembered the silence that fell in the dining hall when the bishop and his wife sat on the hard wood benches to eat their meals.⁴⁷ Muzorewa goes on to confirm the incident by writing, "Saying nothing, Bishop and Mrs. Dodge merely went to eat with the African ministers and laymen."⁴⁸ By this symbolic action of leaving the designated missionary dining area and coming to eat with the African delegates, Dodge conveyed a message both to the missionaries and Africans that the Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia will not be segregated the same way the country had allowed itself to be.

Later on, when it was scheduled that the conference would break from deliberations and delegates would go to a nearby village to dedicate the new Mundenda church, a bus was hired to transport the delegates to the site. Muzorewa writes, “Missionaries jumped into their cars while Africans boarded a hired bus. Many were embarrassed [missionaries] as the bishop boarded the bus with his African pastors. The old patterns of segregation within the Methodist Church were breaking down, even as the white settlers were building stronger ones in the society at large.”⁴⁹

However, Muzorewa did not yet recognize the resolve of his new bishop’s capabilities. Had he known that this was the same Dodge who had once hitch hiked a truck from an obscene driver in Angola, he would have known that Dodge having to ride in a crowded bus full of gospel singing African pastors was not so problematic.

Looking back to the ‘radical’ actions of eating and riding a bus with African delegates at his first annual conference in Zimbabwe, Dodge says,

It was inevitable that if I were going to be true to myself and the Gospel as I understood it, I might offend some people by my actions. I am basically a person of few words and, because of that, some of my actions are more offensive because they are unexpected... Opinions of other are important to me. Yet, when the inner impulse, which I interpret as the voice of the Holy Spirit, demands an action with importunity, then I must act.⁵⁰

Whether Dodge was aware or not of the reputation of Old Mutare as the place where impromptu actions had always changed the direction of the church, his actions in 1957 at the annual conference were seen by Africans as acts of the Holy Spirit at work,

especially at a time when the church searched for a relevant mission to address the many racial issues affecting both church and country.

The revival of 1918 at Old Mutare

Ironically, one of the most celebrated spiritual events in the life of the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is the 1918 revival, which began at Old Mutare, in a chapel only a few yards from the dining hall where Dodge shared his meal with the African delegates. Prior to the 1918 revival, a severe drought affected the country causing the colonial government, for the first time, to help supply the people with food. Even more damaging was that the drought had affected the young church in Zimbabwe especially along the mission stations. To make matters worse, following the drought was an outbreak of influenza.

With the outbreak of the World War I, as the world's attention turned to more urgent matters, mission stations would receive less financial support from American churches. As a result, missionaries received less, and in some cases, no pay. The African pastor- teachers as well as other African staff who worked for the church were not paid during this time leaving several to contemplate quitting their teaching posts in order to seek work in the towns. Disaster followed as The Methodist Church was forced to close forty primary schools.

In the midst of such gloom, two missionaries based at Old Mutare, Eddy Greeley and John Roberts, called for a revival meeting so the church might pray and encourage the dispirited missionaries and African workers. The missionaries invited Rev. Hatch, a

missionary of the Church of Christ based at Rusitu, to preach the revival. As Hatch preached about the love of God, a young pastor-teacher named Samuel Chieza suddenly jumped up from the back of the church, ran to the altar, knelt down and spontaneously began to pray in a loud voice. This was something that had never happened before in the missionary church. The mood was contagious as others in the church soon rushed to the altar to pray and confess their sins.⁵¹ By the time the missionaries dismissed the people for the night, groups of Africans ascended the top of the nearby mountain where they spent the night singing, praying and preaching to one another.

The 1918 revival or *Gore reMweya Mutsvene* (year of the Holy Spirit) as it is popularly called in Zimbabwean Methodism, marked a new era in the life and mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Rhodesia. The event unleashed an unstoppable indigenous evangelism initiative. Using the context of the 1918 revival, and for what it did by unleashing a zeal for evangelism, Dodge's spontaneous actions at the 1957 annual conference, in similar ways, ushered a new era for the Methodist Church. It helped the church discern a call to cast itself as an important player in a highly-segregated society to lead by example and by the teachings of Christ. It would be an example to show others how to eliminate race as a criterion that determined a person's place in society. By Dodge's actions at Annual Conference, he had taken the initial steps to integrate the Methodist Church. Later he writes, "Any church which sets up pattern of segregation limits its own usefulness in the extension of God's Kingdom and also becomes an embarrassment to the entire Christian fellowship; for segregation, as much as anything, limits the effectiveness of the Christian witness."⁵²

Following the historic annual conference in Zimbabwe was the Mozambique Annual Conference. By July 21, 1957, Dodge was in Chicunque, Mozambique personally presiding at the conference. However, in order to get to the conference, Dodge, Eunice and William had driven to Mozambique by way of South Africa. The journey itself had not been uneventful. While in South Africa they had stopped at a restaurant to eat. When they were seated at the table with William Humbane, the owner of the restaurant came to their table and asked William to leave the restaurant because Africans were not allowed admittance. Although Dodge had experienced a similar incident in Nashville, Tennessee in 1955 with Eduardo Mondlane, it was the first time Dodge experienced apartheid, a notorious system of segregation legally instituted in 1948 to separate races and maintain white supremacy in South Africa.

When Dodge told the owner of the restaurant that William was with him and that they were together and that they were merely on their way to Mozambique, the restaurant owner did not budge on his insistence that William should leave. Finally, upon learning that Dodge was a bishop, the restaurant owner offered William a small room by the kitchen where the African cooks worked so that he could finish his meal. As Dodge protested, William volunteered to go to the room he was offered. When the meal was over, Dodge told William never to do so again. He told William that whenever they travelled together, and when they come to a situation like the one they had experienced, it is better they not have a meal at all than be separated.⁵³

The Methodist Church in Mozambique

Like the church in Zimbabwe, the Mozambique Methodist Church was oriented toward rural life. Unlike the missionaries who pioneered in Zimbabwe who emphasized education, the missionaries under Bishop William Taylor, who pioneered the work in Mozambique, emphasized agriculture under the self-supporting missions. As such, the mission centers in Mozambique at Chicique, Inhambane and Cambine were selected for agricultural purposes. Dodge noted that the agriculture program of the Methodist Church in Mozambique “had transformed the countryside, making continuous nutritious food possible throughout the year. Unfortunately, some missionaries had accepted the Portuguese government argument that education was not integral part of a church program.”⁵⁴

As a result, when Dodge arrived in Mozambique to assume his episcopal duties, the church had only two primary schools and not one high school as compared to the two hundred and twelve primary schools and four high schools the church owned in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, Dodge found that the training of pastors in Mozambique was oriented towards rural ministry by which pastors were trained to farm. Consequently, Dodge noted that the ministerial training in Mozambique was at a much lower academic level than the ones found in Angola and Zimbabwe and that the leading “African pastors of the conference had been trained in Southern Rhodesia but because of costs and linguistics, only a few had gone away for studies.”⁵⁵ This helps explain why William Humbane was at Old Mutare.

While in Mozambique Dodge writes, “One day we attempted a trip in our Chevrolet Station Wagon, and for fourteen miles could not once shift into high, travelling most of the time in low, so rough and sandy were the roads. Twenty miles in two hours was our minimum record.”⁵⁶ Dodge would go on to say that the Mozambique annual conference had “many far-reaching decisions. Eleven young men were brought into conference on trial. We felt the Holy Spirit was guiding us throughout.”⁵⁷

On July 22, 1957, with the Zimbabwe and Mozambique conferences now complete, Dodge, Eunice and William began a long trek across the continent from Chicupe, Mozambique to Caxito (near Luanda), Angola where Dodge was to preside over the Angola Annual Conference. It was a trip that would take them from overlooking one ocean to another. Instead of going back through South Africa the Dodge family decided to take the less travelled, northern route along the Indian Ocean to Beira. Although the route was rough, it was by far the shortest. Tired from leading conference, Ralph and Eunice dozed off while William drove the car. If they thought their driver was made of steel they were in a rude awakening because Dodge was awaked by the unusual roughness of the road only to find that they had left the road and were on a plain field. Dodge nudged William who was asleep at the wheel. Fortunately, the car stopped before it went into a ditch. Later Dodge writes, “In all fairness to William, I should say it was the only time I ever found him asleep, at either the typewriter or the wheel.”⁵⁸

Tribal issues in the Angola Annual Conference

Like the other two conferences, the Angola Annual Conference would have its own set of challenges. In a letter dated August 13, 1957, Dodge would write that Caxito was by far the most difficult of the three conferences that he led in 1957. The Methodist Church in Angola was experiencing some significant problems that affected the work of the church and its ability to function. The first problem was financial. The conference had overspent its money leaving things in a bad state. Current expenses alone had left them with \$20,000 overdraft. As a result, drastic measures were needed to curb overspending. Dodge suggested they reduce the number of district superintendents from five down to two, but in doing so, the remaining district superintendents would have to cover significantly wider areas. After much discussion, the district superintendents proposed and agreed to take a reduction in salary. Still, only one District was merged with another, leaving three other districts. In the end, four of the superintendents were retained and other salaried staff in the conference agreed to take a reduction in pay in order to save the situation.

If the financial mess was not enough for Dodge to contend with, the second problem affected the clergy and the morale of the church in general. Three pastors had been withdrawn from ministerial duties at the conference for a moral lapse. At a time when the church needed more pastors, three pastors having to be withdrawn complicated things. Dodge wrote, "This, of course hung a dark cloud of concern over the conference."⁵⁹

And yet further still, there was third problem to contend with that greatly troubled Dodge. It was an issue of nationalism in the form of tribal rivalries, something he had not seen for all the years he had lived in Angola, but had more recently come into fruition. In Luanda, there had been open fights between the Ambaquista young people and the Icolo eBengo young people that led to wider tribal problems. Even more so, the tribal fights and hostilities were evident at the 1957 annual conference among the church delegates themselves. Not only was the conference full of these tribal resentments, it was especially prominent in the appointment of pastors and district superintendents. The Icolo eBengo resented the appointments of the Ambaquista pastors to their churches. Dodge writes:

I was warned that the people in the villages were at the point of revolts. I tried to ease the situation by appointing a missionary DS and by transferring some of the Ambquista pastors out of the Icolo eBengo. That gave some relief, but the problem is basically a spiritual one and the healing will have to be on that deep level. Recognition of tribal loyalties helped me exercise great care in appointments. The emergence of the Dembo people as a third group will help bridge the rift caused by the two great tribal rivalries of the past.⁶⁰

With the tribal conflict posing as perhaps the most dangerous of the Angola Conference problems that year, Dodge decided that the events in Angola needed close attention and supervision from the bishop himself. Following the conference, Dodge would stay in Angola for three months to monitor the situation and allow Eunice to fly back to Zimbabwe to be close to the children. While in Angola, Dodge revisited many of the churches that began under his district superintendency. At the conclusion of three months, Dodge returned to Zimbabwe.

Arriving back in Zimbabwe, Dodge learned there was still no communication regarding the Portuguese government about the status of his application for a residence permit in Mozambique. As a result, Dodge decided to abstain from pursuing the matter of the application any further. Instead, he decided to establish his residence and episcopal area office in Zimbabwe. He chose Harare, Zimbabwe's urbanized capital, as the best place to establish the new headquarters of the church. At first, the move was not well received by some because at that time, in 1958, there were only two Methodist congregations in all of Harare. Indeed, the bulk of Methodist churches in Zimbabwe were highly concentrated in Manicaland although some churches were in Murewa and Mutoko districts. Furthermore, the church had already purchased some properties in Mutare that could have been used as office space for the episcopal office. Nevertheless, Dodge had his reasons to move to the capital. In Harare, Dodge could establish an office for all three conferences under his jurisdiction. Furthermore, other denominations had their head offices in Harare and the presence of the international airport there was an important benefit.

In Harare, Dodge and Eunice rented a house in a predominantly Jewish community. The decision proved to be a good one as the house was not only in a secure location because the Jewish community, being a minority group themselves, were more welcoming to Africans, but because also they would not complain when the Dodges had African visitors in their home. The Land Tenure Act of 1939 required that "Africans lived in the city under one of the three categories: in African townships, in nonracial areas (which were very scarce), or with appropriate permit at his or her place of employment."⁶¹ In most white neighborhoods, Africans were required to carry "visitor"

permit. With the search for his home complete, Dodge set about renting office space on the fifth floor of a building in the city center.

Dodge would keep a busy schedule in Harare. Monday through Thursday consisted of attending to important matters of his episcopal area at his office. Friday was usually reserved for his off day where he preferred to work in his home garden. Weekends were often scheduled as visits to churches or attending programs such as district conferences, youth, women and men's events, where most of such programs were held at rural schools. If it were a district conference, the bishop's presence was highly expected.

Eunice often accompanied him to the district conferences with William Humbane as the driver. They had to carry with them camp cots since only food was provided by the hosting church. Dodge became quite familiar with *sadza*, a staple meal for Zimbabweans. *Sadza* is made out of corn meal and usually served with beef or chicken stew or vegetables. Rice was also served for missionaries who were not inclined to like *sadza*. At the district conferences, the district superintendents were in charge and the bishop was expected to preach and administer communion at the closing Sunday rally, an event usually held outside because so many would attend the Sunday rallies. Since there was often no public address system, Dodge learned to exert his voice to be heard by the crowds that gathered to hear him. He would preach in English and his sermons were translated into Shona through interpreters.

Beyond the district conferences were the yearly camp meetings organized by men, women and youth in which the bishop would make every effort to attend. The women's

camp meetings were scheduled for ten days and the men's and youth's camp meetings usually started on Fridays and ended on Sundays. These camp meetings were held in rural areas with each location having the capacity to accommodate thousands of people.⁶² The women's camp meetings attracted the biggest crowd, however, everyone regardless of gender or age could attend any of the camp meetings. People would come from long distances to attend the meetings, especially the women's camp meetings. They would arrive from buses, cars, lorries, ox carts, and often on foot. The attendees were responsible for cooking their own meals, while the host district was required to cook meals for the missionaries, pastors and their spouses. Eunice as the bishop's wife was according to the *Rukwadzano* (the women's organization) the President. Her executive committee was made up of wives of district superintendents and pastors.⁶³ In a letter to her friends, Eunice describes the *Rukwadzano* camp meeting:

There is good preaching, much praying and witnessing, and almost constant singing throughout the day and often far into the night. It is inevitable that those who sing late at night often sleep during the morning preaching session, especially when the sun is high. Much, but not all, of the preaching is done by male evangelists. The emotional temperature rise as the week progresses and many people, sometimes even men, make commitment to follow Christ. At different parts of the camp one can hear simultaneous groans of deep regret for sins committed, and shouts of joy at receiving forgiveness. The camp meetings are the powerhouse generating warmth and light for the Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia.⁶⁴

The men's counterpart of the *Rukwadzano* was the *Wabvuwi* (the fishers of men). Unlike the women, the men's camp meetings attracted much smaller crowds. However, this was often the case because the *Wabvuwi* camp meetings were designed to be held in

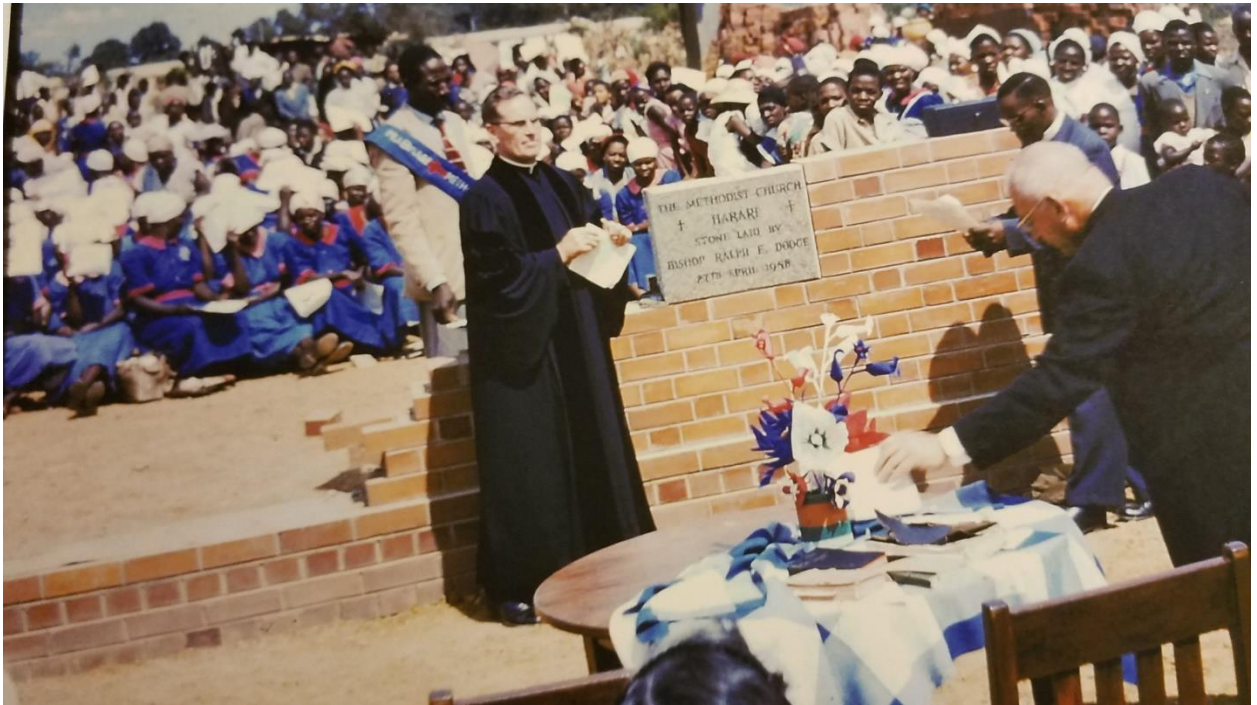
newly evangelized areas. The bishop was the President of the *Wabvuwi* working with an executive of laymen. The *Wabvuwi* were known for their unique and penetrating singing which usually brought positive responses from hardened non-Christians.⁶⁵

Dodge became so fond of *wabvuwi* singing that in 1959 he assembled a quartet of *Wabvuwi* who were known as The Ambassadors Quartet. The names of the men who formed the quartet were Ben Jambga, Josiah Njagu (both from Mutoko), Kasambira and Nyamurowa (both from Mutare). The Ambassadors Quartet traveled to America to sing in churches and at annual conferences raising money for Dodge's education program. At the 1958 *Wabvuwi* camp meeting in July, the coldest month in Zimbabwe, Dodge describes the camp meeting:

I attended the open-air meetings in July, the cold month in Southern Africa. We sat around a campfire with feet roasting and backs chilling as men witnessed to their faith. Some of us had sleeping bags; others just slept around the open fire, waking to replenish the fuel when chilled. The missionary superintendent was so cold that night that he crawled into his sleeping bag with all his clothes and shoes. When the thermometer drops below forty degrees, sleeping on the ground, even in a sleeping bag can be a memorable experience. How welcome is that cup of hot tea in the morning.⁶⁶

Now that Bishop Dodge was residing in Zimbabwe, and unlike the previous bishops, his physical presence served to do two things. For one, it helped strengthen the camp meetings in Zimbabwe. The people were inspired by a bishop who was willing to leave the comfort of his home and spent nights sleeping around campfires with the people. Because of Dodge's leadership, the more than one hundred missionaries serving in Zimbabwe also began to attend the camp meetings.

Another area the Methodist Church benefited from having a bishop in residence was that he was available to attend programs at local churches, such as the breaking of ground where churches were to be built, or the commissioning of completed churches.



Bishop Dodge blessing the laying of a cornerstone at the building of the Harare Methodist Church (now St. Paul's United Methodist Church) in Mbare, Harare on 27 April 1958. Photo Courtesy: Dr. Bennett Horton.

The 1958 Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) Annual Conference was held at Old Umtali from May 4 – 9. If the 1957 annual conference was about breaking down the racial barriers through eating with the African delegates, the 1958 annual conference was about Bishop Dodge challenging the Zimbabwean Methodists in three areas: evangelism, education and agriculture. In his episcopal address, Bishop Dodge relayed to the conference three questions by which he hoped they would ponder throughout the ensuing year and to bring forth answers at the next annual conference. On evangelism he asked, “How many

converts have you made during the past year?”⁶⁷ On education he asked, “How many books have you read during the year, apart from the Bible?”⁶⁸ On agriculture he asked, “How many fruit trees have you planted during the past year?”⁶⁹ The challenge for Methodists to grow fruit trees was well received by those living in the rural areas. The fruit tree that most Methodists planted was the mango tree. It is said that one could walk in a village and identify Methodists’ homes by a mango tree.⁷⁰ In 1958, Dodge launched a campaign for Methodists to grow fruit trees. As a result, the mango tree became known as a Methodist tree in Zimbabwe.

Bishop Dodge’s higher education initiative

As the delegates settled in for conference, Dodge would begin to instruct the initial steps of implementing an ambitious high education program for the Methodist Church. In 1957, a multicultural and non-racial college, University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now University of Zimbabwe) was opened in Zimbabwe. Following Prime Minister Garfield Todd’s policy of partnership, the university was received by Africans with high hopes. However, such hopes were dashed when it became apparent that the university would mainly cater to white students in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. When the university opened its doors for the first time in March of 1957, there were only eight African students (7 men and 1 woman) and sixty white students (33 men and 27 women).⁷¹ At a time when the government was spending \$197.30 per white student in high school as compared to \$18.40 per African student in high school it became ever more obvious that Africans were extremely disadvantaged at meeting more

rigorous academic requirements for enrollment at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.⁷² By 1958, Dodge viewed that the only main objective of the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was to “prepare a small number of white minority to exercise a paternalism over large African population they believed they were destined to rule.”⁷³

An opportunity to promote higher education in the Methodist Church came in April of 1958 when Dodge’s friend, Dr. Charles Fuller, a former missionary and now a professor at Missouri School of Religion in Columbia secured a one-year scholarship for a pastor from Zimbabwe to study at Missouri School of Religion. Dodge conferred with his cabinet and the cabinet commended Dodge to choose either Rev. Jonah Kawadza or Rev. Abel T. Muzorewa. Both pastors had young families; however, the scholarship was only available for one of them. Whoever was to accept the scholarship was going to have to leave his young family in Zimbabwe. As a result, during the annual conference, Dodge called Rev. Kawadza aside and shared with him about the opportunity to go and study in the USA. Kawadza replied, “Let me talk to my wife.”⁷⁴ After he consulted with his wife who was also attending the conference Kawadza came back to the bishop and reported, “My wife feels that it is too much to ask her to care for our four little children. Perhaps at a later date there will be another opportunity.”⁷⁵

Dodge called Muzorewa and told him about the opportunity to go and study in the USA. In his autobiography, *Rise Up and Walk*, Muzorewa narrates the incident:

The opportunity [to study in the USA] came unexpectedly while I was attending the 1958 Annual Conference of our church... I was breathless

when Bishop Ralph Dodge said to me: ‘One of our former missionaries, Dr. Charles Fuller, has raised money to send an African student to America for higher education. Would you like to go?’ My first thought was: ‘Of course I want to go!’ My second thought was, ‘Can I leave my wife and children?’ Quickly I went to break the news to Maggie [his wife]. She did not hesitate, however, to face separation for my sake. She urged: ‘Take up the offer. I will remain with the three little boys... I hurried back to report to Bishop Dodge our decision, and soon thereafter heard the announcement to the church leaders: ‘A.T Muzorewa – Left without appointment to attend school. I, and many others, will never forget that it was Bishop Dodge who had the vision and determination to crash through the barrier to higher education for Zimbabweans.’⁷⁶

Muzorewa went on to become the trailblazer of Dodge’s education program. As former Foreign Division Secretary he still had some contacts and people he could reach out about his education program. Dr. Fuller had opened the opportunity for him. Furthermore, The Methodist Church in America was financially sound as a result of the American economic boom following World War II. Churches were building massive buildings because they had the money. Dodge wanted them to share the wealth. He wanted the American churches to sponsor students for higher education. He also began to nudge the Board of Missions to use its Crusade Scholarship to sponsor African students. The Crusade Scholarship program which had been in place for many years was strictly for professional and graduate students. However, Dodge began to negotiate for the Crusade Scholarship to include undergraduate students as well.

To encourage more young Africans in the church in the area of education, Dodge invited Bishop Prince Albert Taylor of Liberia to visit Zimbabwe. Taylor was elected in New Orleans the same year as Dodge and was assigned to Liberia. Bishop Taylor was an

African American, distinguished scholar, editor and clergyman. The Dodges hosted Bishop Taylor on September 30, 1958. They showed the bishop the work and projects of the church in Zimbabwe and together, they spoke to hundreds of students in the Methodist mission schools and encouraged them to reach for the highest and honorable professions. The Bishop's visit concluded with a visit to Victoria Falls.

For most of the bishop's visit everything went smoothly, with pleasant happenings. However, as an African American, and a bishop of the Methodist Church, there were some things Bishop Taylor could do that an African could not. But attitudes toward him would range from reverence to complete disrespect, depending upon the kind of Europeans that were encountered. At the Victoria Falls Hotel, nobody paid any attention to their inter-racial group. However, on their way back from Victoria Falls to Bulawayo, they stopped at a little inn for breakfast, bought gasoline, and were about to leave when a Land Rover stopped at the gasoline pump and two Roman Catholic priests alighted. They saw Dodge's clerical collar and waved a greeting. When they came over to the car, they noted the Mutare license plate on Dodge's car. Dodge explained to them that they now lived in Harare. They replied that they were from Hwange. Then Dodge told them, "You must meet Bishop Taylor of Liberia."⁷⁷

When Bishop Taylor, who was inside the car, climbed out to be presented to the priests, to Dodge and Eunice's utter astonishment, the two European clergymen each knelt and kissed Bishop Taylor's hand. After a few minutes of conversation, they said their goodbyes and again the two priests knelt and kissed Bishop Taylor's hand. When they got a safe distance away, they all chuckled and agreed that Methodist clergymen would not have behaved the way the priests had done.

At their next stop for petrol, Dodge noticed that one of his tires was low on pressure. As he filled the car with gas, he started to change the tire. Eunice noticed a tea room next to the convenient store at the petrol station and suggested that since it was lunch time, they could eat their packed lunch inside. They ordered drinks and sat down to eat their lunch of fried chicken and sandwiches. However, when they were about to finish eating, a husky British man in khaki shirt and shorts entered the tea room. Bishop Dodge, Eunice and Bishop Taylor were the only occupants in the eatery. The British man angrily pointed to Dodge and shouted, “Tell that bloody Kaffir to get out of here. This is not any kaffir eating place.”⁷⁸ Shocked, but keeping his cool, Dodge replied to the angry man, “I would like you to meet Bishop Prince Taylor of Liberia.”⁷⁹

To which the man replied, “I don’t care who he is, to me he is damn Kaffir. Tell him to get out of here.”⁸⁰ Dodge replied, “No, I won’t.”⁸¹ Dodge angrily refused and his heart was pounding furiously.⁸²

For the first time Bishop Dodge publicly voiced his resistance. The man would not deign to speak to Bishop Taylor himself. So in one day, Bishop Taylor saw two extremes of European behavior in Southern Rhodesia: a kiss on the hand to an almost a kick in the rear, from respect to abuse. For his part, Bishop Taylor had a grasp of the problems of colonial Zimbabwe.

While the incident was humiliating for Bishop Taylor and embarrassing for the Dodges to have their guest excoriated in their presence, the incident served as a turning point for Bishop Dodge. He would become more inclined to voice his disapproval of segregation. In Nashville, with Eduardo Modhlane, Dodge had simply walked away. In

South Africa, at a restaurant with William Humbane, it was William who volunteered to leave. However, on this incident, Dodge voiced his refusal to leave telling the British man in his face that he nor his guest were going anywhere.

The 1958 Angola Annual Conference was better organized than the 1957 session. In the family letter of October 19, 1958 Eunice wrote that they had travelled for six days from Harare to Quessua with the Stine family in a Land Rover. The host pastor, Rev. Santos da Costa Matozo, who had just returned from a year of study in Brazil did an excellent job at organizing the event. Unlike the previous year, the conference finances had improved significantly, mainly because they kept within their budget, allowing them to make a dent in the deficit. The 1958 conference had seen a few new missionaries arrive while others returned from furlough – there were twenty missionaries as opposed to eight at the previous conference. Eunice observed that African delegates at the annual conference had “practically taken over the Angolan conference; they far out-numbered the missionary members.”⁸³

Bishop Dodge would begin 1959 with two ambitious, bold programs around education and integration in the church. The education program was in response to the hunger for higher education among young people in the church. The young people challenged the church to do something beyond what the colonial government was doing for the younger population. The University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland had greatly disappointed in its admission of Africans. Still, in the face of demands from the young people, Dodge was compelled not only to hear the concerns, but act. He looked beyond University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland set his eyes on overseas colleges in USA, Europe, and India. He believed that,

Because of its very nature, the Church must look to the future more than it does in the past. History is important; for we understand the trends of today through studying history; but the church must never be an active agent for return to some period in history, even though that period may have been glorious from a religious point of view. The church must always be optimistic enough to move forward.⁸⁴

While financing would always be a challenge, Dodge began to explore new ways to finance the education programs. He worked tirelessly to persuade the Board of Missions in New York to allow the Crusade Scholarship program to allow undergraduate students. He also needed to sell his program to the missionaries and explain to them what the education program entailed for the missionaries in the future. In March of that year he sent a memorandum to the missionaries in Zimbabwe explaining, “Missionaries should not be made to feel that they have failed if they work themselves out of a creative job.”⁸⁵ In the same memorandum, Dodge explained that through his education program, he would not create jobs for missionaries that the Africans themselves could fill. Having explained his higher education program to both the Board of Missions and the missionaries, Dodge prepared to reach out to influential people such as college presidents, church leaders, business people and churches in the USA to support his education program.

The second program that Dodge initiated in 1959 was an integration program. This program focused on housing at mission stations. Unlike in Angola, where mission station staff, missionaries, and African workers lived together, in Zimbabwe, things were not as cohesive. Missionary houses were built on their own subdivision and African workers’ houses mostly known as compounds were constructed on their own. In some

cases, missionary homes would remain unoccupied while African workers were cramped together in small houses.

Realizing the enormous task before him to integrate the community life at the mission stations, Dodge utilized the church's printing press at Old Mutare Mission. The printing press had been used to print the church's monthly newspaper called *Umbowo* (*The Witness*) and Christian education materials. Dodge began to write some teaching materials on different topics which were printed in the form of booklets or pamphlets. The booklets were called *The Church and-----Series*. The booklets were sold at a low price in order to encourage affordability for every pastor, leader and member. 100 booklets could be purchased for one British pound.

The first publication of the *The Church and -----Series* Dodge wrote in 1959 was *The Church and Integration*. Being aware of the evils of segregation in the country, Dodge wanted the Methodists in Zimbabwe to be more active and aware of his own opinions on the issue as well as the Methodist Church's teaching on segregation. He writes, "The Methodist Church opposes any and all kinds of segregation."⁸⁶ He emphasized Jesus's prayer in John 17, "That they may be one" as the biblical foundation for integration.

Dodge was frank and honest in criticizing his own denomination in which he was a leader by pointing out that "Some branches of the Methodist Church in the United States do not have clean hands at all in this matter of segregation... The Methodist Church is not happy with its pattern of segregation and is working strenuously to break

down all discrimination.”⁸⁷ Having criticized his own denomination Dodge stated his ecclesiological and theological position on segregation.

Any church which sets up a pattern of segregation limits its own usefulness in the extension of God’s Kingdom and also becomes an embarrassment to the entire Christian fellowship; for segregation, as much as anything, limits effectiveness of the Christian witness. No individual or organization should claim to follow the teaching of Jesus Christ and at the same time exclude another individual from its fellowship. Love and inclusiveness are partners...Any privileges which are legitimate for one section of society must, in the Christian philosophy of life, be available for all other members of society. Segregation, whether is practiced within or without the church, stigmatizes individuals. It keeps them from entering into the more abundant life. The Christian answer to segregation in any form is a completely integrated society.”⁸⁸

The publication on *The Church and Integration* led to the formation of the Social Action Committee at the 1959 Rhodesia Annual Conference, held May 3-10 in Nyadiri. Dodge called for the formation of a small, interracial study group to be set up in churches and communities to study, among other things, the lack of harmony and understanding between European and African members in the churches. It aimed to address areas of the church where segregation continued to remain the most entrenched. For practical purposes, Dodge instructed that each church initiate a study group to facilitate local participation that would deal with issues of race that affected their own communities. Nyadiri Mission station was selected to formulate a path of integration into its community life. Initially, both the primary and secondary schools at Nyadiri mission were declared multi-racial school. Next, missionaries and African workers at the mission station would intentionally live as neighbors and meet frequently in study groups.

During the session of annual conference, the elected Social Action Committee went on to ask the conference to adopt the following political statement, “We affirm that we believe in equal opportunities for all people irrespective of race, nationality or creed. We believe in free speech, free religious assembly, and a free press as essential to the free communication of ideas, and deplore any action which would weaken or negate these rights.”⁸⁹

Bishop Booth, of the Elizabethtown area at that time, attended the conference at Nyadiri. His presence at the conference was very helpful for Dodge. During the night of May 8, Bishop Dodge woke up with a pain and numbing in his leg. Unable to even stretch out his leg, he began sweating profusely. Thinking it could be a stroke, Dodge immediately called for Eunice to contact the doctor. Eunice and Clifford called Dr. Bennett Horton, a first term missionary doctor at Nyadire mission hospital. Dr. Horton immediately came to the home and examined the bishop. For Dodge it was a nerve-racking situation considering he had just learned of the death of a colleague bishop from a heart attack in the USA. However, Dodge was relieved of his great concern of having a stroke when Dr. Horton announced, “It’s no stroke or heart disability. It might be bursitis. Just lie down and rest and in the morning come to the hospital for a more complete examination.”⁹⁰ Dr. Horton gave the bishop some pain medication and told Eunice to call him if the condition deteriorated.

The next morning, Eunice called Bishop Booth who came by the house to pray with them. Dodge asked Booth to preside over the conference that day as he needed to go to the hospital. At the hospital, Dr. Horton examined Bishop Dodge thoroughly and told the bishop that his condition puzzled him. Dr. Horton suspected that the bishop had the

symptoms of polio but given the bishop's age, he could not say with certainty. However, he told Bishop Dodge to lie in a tub with hot water as a way of keeping his muscles warm and relaxed. That day he alternated between the hot tub and walking in the hospital corridors with the assistance of his son Clifford. On May 10th, which was the last day of the conference, Bishop Dodge, receiving some assistance, stood behind the pulpit and he preached the closing sermon of the annual conference.

When he returned to his home in Harare, Bishop Dodge made an appointment with a doctor who confirmed that he had had a light attack of polio. The doctor recommended some exercises for the left leg to build the strength of his muscles. Rather than using an elevator to his fifth floor offices, the doctor told Bishop Dodge to use the stairs instead. For his evening walks, he attached a bag of sand to his left ankle and dragged it along with him. Some of the African pastors who visited and who saw the bishop dragging his bag of sand would joke about someone casting *juju* in his path at conference. Dodge writes, "The poor circulation and limited sensory response in my leg will always be with me to remind me of my light bout of polio – or was it something else? I have never been certain."⁹¹ In terms of his health, unlike in Angola where Dodge was susceptible to constant malaria attacks, in Zimbabwe those "attacks of malaria had been almost eliminated."⁹²

Dodge's appeal for support for his higher education initiatives was well received by the Board of Missions, where they further promoted it as a church-wide mission program on Africa for the fall and winter of 1959-1960. As a result, Dodge and Eunice were invited to speak in many churches throughout America about the Methodist work in

Africa. Not long after annual conference at Nyadiri Methodist Center, Eunice left for the USA to attend Lois' graduation at Carleton College in Minnesota.

Dodge had also arranged for the Ambassadors Quartet to go to the USA on a tour to sing in churches and at various annual conferences. The quartet was well received for their singing of Christian music and African traditional songs and dances. They entertained people with songs such as *God Bless Africa*, *Light on the Cross*, *Pamberi Masoja*, and others. The quartet was such a success that it raised more money than expected. By May of 1960 Dodge put together an education committee to start the process of identifying and selecting the first group of students to be sent to the USA.

Bishop Dodge, Clifford and Peggy left Zimbabwe for the USA in August 1959. Ever since Dodge had left the United States on October 17, 1956 to assume episcopal duties in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, he had not been home. The bishop and wife had made a decision that both Clifford and Peggy would begin school in September in Indianapolis, the place where Edward Jr. was attending medical school. Clifford was already seventeen while Peggy was now twelve. After her graduation from Carleton College, Lois would begin her graduate studies at Yale in the fall of 1959. Since Bishop Dodge planned to attend the General Conference of the Methodist Church in Denver in 1960, Bishop Dodge, Eunice and Peggy planned to return to Zimbabwe after the General Conference. The time away from Africa and the opportunity to be home allowed for Dodge and his wife to travel to many of the supporting churches in the United States to speak about the good work in Africa and solicit funds for the education program. When the family gathered in Indianapolis for Christmas in 1959, it would be the final time they had all the family together; dad, mom, Ed Jr. Lois, Clifford and Peggy.

The 1960 General Conference was held in Denver, Colorado from April 27- May 7. Dodge, Rev. Ernest Sells, Rev. Jonah Kawadza, Ben Jambga and Josiah Njagu attended the conference as delegates representing Zimbabwe. Significantly, this was the first time a Zimbabwean delegation attended a General Conference. Although Dodge wrote that he was warmly received by his episcopal colleagues, and further given time to report on the work of the Methodist Church in his area, he writes, “I never felt that I was one of the group. Their friendship circles were well formed and fairly well closed. The American elected bishops met semiannually. It was then considered an extravagance for us “overseas” bishops to make the costly trip so often.”⁹³

Leadership development program for Africa

At the General Conference, Bishops Booth and Dodge agreed that the education program that Dodge had started should be spread out to include leadership development for all of Africa. The General Conference budgeted one million dollars to train African leaders at a post school level. With these funds and the additional monies raised from individual churches, Bishop Dodge returned to Zimbabwe after the General Conference with the immediate task of selecting students to begin studies in the USA. Bishop Dodge’s friend, Dr. Richard Palmer, who was the president of Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, agreed to admit Dodge’s first batch of students.

The Dodges arrived in Zimbabwe when the Annual Conference had already begun at Old Mutare. Rev. Hunter Griffin, his Administrative Assistant, was presiding over the conference. Dodge immediately tasked Rev. Griffin to lead the education

committee to select students for Morningside College. Twenty of the students, most of whom were already teachers in the Methodist schools, were selected to make the trip. Other students were also sent to Britain and India, while a few from Angola and Mozambique were sent to Portugal. A total of forty-five students from Bishop Dodge's area were sent overseas in 1960.⁹⁴ Thirty of which were students from Zimbabwe. Because the first group of students selected was a hurried process, Dodge acknowledges "Certainly mistakes were made, as character and motivation may not have been considered as strongly as academic credentials, and some very good young people were bypassed."⁹⁵

Rev. Griffin worked with the selected students to work on their college application forms and to help them acquire passports and visas to enter the United States. The twenty students admitted at Morningside College left in early August to begin classes in the fall of 1960. In a letter to friends, dated May 28, 1960, Eunice stated that the 1960 Rhodesia Annual Conference was a good one because it breathed "winds of change."⁹⁶ The winds of change included the approval of the record number of students going to study overseas as part of the leadership development of the church.

For the first time Bishop Dodge appointed Africans to lead the three largest mission stations as chairmen: Mr. K Choto at Old Mutare, Mr. J. Chidzikwe at Nyadiri and Mr. J. Chitombo at Mutambara. He also appointed Rev. P. Nyamukapa and Rev. L. Chieza as District Superintendents of Mutare South District and Mutasa Makoni District respectively. The two District Superintendents received vehicles to use for their work in their respective districts.

Josiah Njagu who attended the General Conference in Denver, Colorado and had traveled with the Ambassadors' Quartet in USA raising money for the education program gave a report of his observation of the Methodist Church in America.

Most people in America who supported the church and sent money to missions were plain and ordinary people like you and me. Most of them are not wealthy but they give sacrificially. Before I left for the USA and as a teacher at a mission school I used to think that I worked for the missionaries. Now I realize that I am working with the missionary at a great task which is neither theirs nor ours, but God's.⁹⁷

Following the Annual Conference, Bishop Dodge bought a house located at 4 Oswald Close, Mount Pleasant, Harare at a cost of eighteen thousand dollars. The house was a few blocks from the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Since the University was designated as a multi-racial area, a home near the university allowed Africans to visit the episcopal residence without the requirement of the "visitor" permit.

Josiah Njagu's report at the annual conference about his observation of the American church compelled Bishop Dodge to write his second lesson in *The Church and ----- Series*. The Methodist Church relied heavily on the financial support from the Board of Missions. The Methodist schools received good subsidies from government and all non-missionary teachers were paid their salaries by the government. The African's financial support for the church's budget was low and when Josiah Njagu confessed that for many years he thought that he worked for the missionaries, and he realized now that he was working for God, Dodge appreciated Njagu's new found understanding. As a result of Njagu's revelation, Dodge wrote *The Church and Stewardship*. There was no doubt that Dodge treated Africans as colleagues and equals, yet he also expected that they

did not see themselves as less equal in the area of supporting the church financially. He wanted African Methodists to know that they could give from the blessings they had.

Therefore, Dodge promoted tithing as the biblical form of giving in the church.

Failing to recognize the Africans' deep sense of stewardship, some early missionaries tended to deviate from the Biblical pattern of Christian stewardship because of the general material poverty of the early converts. Rather than follow the established pattern of the tithe, a church tax was levied against the church members and often paid at the same time as school fees. All people paid the same amount irrespective of their income. The practice is quite unscriptural and has hindered the development of the church in Africa. I am against this practice of a uniform church fee since I believe that both the Scriptural and practical basis for supporting the Christian enterprise is through a systematic giving of a tithe of one's income... So to you who have freely received the good things of the Gospel, now comes the call to freely give. As a minimum, may we give first of ourselves and then at least one tenth of our income.⁹⁸

While the winds of change were blowing in Zimbabwe as Africans were being appointed into positions of leadership in the church, politically speaking, Zimbabweans were in a state of confusion. African nationalists and leaders of African political parties were being incarcerated. In cities such as Bulawayo and Harare, demonstrations and protests had become the order of the day and many were brutally put down by force.

In the Congo, Belgium granted the Africans independence on June 30, 1960. Seeing their Congolese neighboring country independent, Angolans began to demand the same from Portugal. Politically, it was just a matter of time before a war broke out in Angola because of the Portuguese government's heavy handed tactics at the slightest provocation. When Dodge was in Angola in August 1960 for the annual conference, he attempted to schedule a meeting with the Portuguese Governor to register his concern

about the escalating tensions between the Angolans and the Portuguese. These tensions had again been reflected at the annual conference. However, the governor refused to meet with Bishop Dodge. Undeterred, Dodge met with the American Consul based in Luanda instead and shared with him the changes in attitude he had observed when he visited the churches, especially in the demeanor of the Dembos. The Dembos were now openly resisting the Portuguese labor laws which forced them to work on Portuguese coffee plantations and Dodge feared that the Dembos were on the verge of a revolt. Dodge writes, “He [American Consul] assured me that open revolt was out of question; the Portuguese police had everything under control. It would be suicide for the blacks to revolt.”⁹⁹

In Angola, the Protestant churches, especially the Baptists and the Methodists, were being accused by the Portuguese government of provoking the resistance to the labor laws. The Methodist missionary at Luanda mission, Rev. James Russell was expelled from Angola in March 1960 since he was the Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of Angola, a position Dodge once held. Russell’s deportation was a direct result of an interview with a *New York Times* reporter about the political situation in Angola. In the article that was subsequently published, the reporter quoted Rev. Russell as calling the United States to support African nationalism in all Portuguese territories “before it was too late.”¹⁰⁰

From Angola, Bishop Dodge rushed back to Zimbabwe for the Africa Central Conference, August 20-29, 1960, at Nyadiri Methodist Center. The Africa Central Conference taking place immediately following the independence of Ghana on March 6, 1957 and the Congo (Zaire) on June 30, 1960 filled its leaders with optimism for

independence from colonized Africa. Bishop Booth and Bishop Dodge, the two bishops in the Africa Central Conference, entitled their episcopal address “Christ’s Commission for a Changing Continent.” The bishops called the Africa Central Conference to understand that with almost everything changing rapidly in Africa, the African Methodists needed to witness change as opportunity for ministry. The bishops rallied the African Methodists to understand that Christ’s Commission in the changing Africa was in four areas. First was the commission to “feed my sheep” through education. The bishops noted that “The greatest hunger known in Africa today is for education. The people of Africa have awaked to the fact that any kind of equality – social, political, or economic – without equal training is impossible. If Africa is to take her proper place as one of the great continents of the world, the legitimate and laudable hunger for education must be satisfied.”¹⁰¹

The second commission was to “heal the sick” through the church’s medical health programs. The bishops reminded the church that “healing miracles have been performed by the thousands in our Methodist hospitals and clinics. Yet we have not been able to adequately meet the need of all our people due to understaffing and limited facilities.”¹⁰²

The third commission was to “be ye reconciled.” Bishop Booth and Bishop Dodge pointed out that throughout “Africa at this time, there is a special need for reconciliation. In areas of newly found political independence there is the call for inter-tribal cooperation. In the areas of multi-racial society there is the call to recognize each member as an individual.”¹⁰³

The fourth commission was “freely ye have received, freely give.” The bishops called the African Methodists to support the church financially. “We accept with dignity and appreciation the gifts from friends overseas who have learned through experience that ‘it is more blessed to give than to receive.’ We do not want to become dependent upon their generosity nor lessen our own efforts. We believe that God calls us to give generously and to receive graciously and gratefully.”¹⁰⁴ The bishops ended their episcopal address by saying,

Our response to Christ’s commission must be rededication of self, obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit, preparation commensurate to the task at hand, and cooperation with God and with our colleagues in the staggering task of building the Church in Africa. May that Church be holy; may it be beautiful; may it be warm in fellowship; may it be inspiring to youth and age alike! May it be a shelter in the time of storm. May it be a star of Hope. May it be a marked pathway. May it be all that God desires it to be in our new Africa. This will be assured if we are responsive to Christ’s Commission for a changing continent.¹⁰⁵



At the 1960 Africa Central Conference at Nyadiri

From left: Bishops Newell S. Booth, Raines and Ralph Dodge with Peggy

By end of 1960 political changes in the Congo and Angola had outpaced the optimism that characterized the Africa Central Conference of Nyadiri Methodist Center. Tribal wars broke out in some parts of Angola and in the Congo. Some missionaries in the Congo were evacuated to Zimbabwe. The first quadrennium of Bishop Dodge's episcopacy ended with Angola on the verge of a complete civil war.

Notes

- ¹ *Official Journal of the Africa Central Conference of the Methodist Church*, 1956.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ “Bishop Ralph E. Dodge,” *The Africa Christian Advocate* 14, no. 4 (October – December, 1956), 6.
- ⁵ William Humbane, interview by author, Mutare, May 7, 2014.
- ⁶ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 113.
- ⁷ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Family, February 14, 1957.
- ⁸ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Family, February 14, 1957.
- ⁹ Ralph E. Diffendorfer, Paul Hutchinson, & William F. McDermott, eds., *The World Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Chicago: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), 122.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Barbara H. Lewis, *Methodist Overseas Missions* (New York: Board of the Methodist Church, 1953), 18.
- ¹² Ralph E. Diffendorfer, Paul Hutchinson, & William F. McDermott, eds., *The World Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 122.
- ¹³ Abel Tendekayi Muzorewa, *Rise Up and Walk* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 44.
- ¹⁴ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 115.
- ¹⁵ Muzorewa, *Rise Up and Walk*, 44.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 45.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Dickson A. Mungazi, *The Cross Between Rhodesia and Zimbabwe: Racial Conflict in Rhodesia, 1962-1979* (Chicago: Vantage Press, 1981), 8.
- ¹⁹ Tafataona Pasipaipa Mahoso, *Between Two Nationalisms: A Study in Liberal Activism and Western Domination Zimbabwe 1920 – 1980* (PhD. Diss., Temple University, 1986), 223.
- ²⁰ Mungazi, *The Cross Between Rhodesia and Zimbabwe*, 5.
- ²¹ Michael W. Casey, *The Rhetoric of Sir Garfield Todd: Christian Imagination and the Dream of an African Democracy* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 56.
- ²² Mahoso, *Between Two Nationalisms*, 223.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 127.
- ²⁶ Todd’s *Education Policy* was designed to ensure as many African students as possible had access to educational opportunities. The relationship between Dodge and Todd remained cordial but both men would be punished heavily by Ian Smith.
- ²⁷ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary*, (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1964), 15.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 19.
- ²⁹ Fabulous Moyo, *The Bible, the Bullet and the Ballot* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 26-27.
- ³⁰ Kwame Nkrumah, Speech at the Conference on Independent African States. Accra, Ghana: April 15, 1958.
- ³¹ Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 88.
- ³² Kunonga, *Roots of the Zimbabwe Revolution*, 62.
- ³³ Nathan Goto, *African and Missionary Partnership in Christian Mission: Rhodesia – Zimbabwe 1897-1968* (Kearney, NE: Morris Publishing Company, 2006), 11.
- ³⁴ W. J. van der Merwe, *From Mission Field to Autonomous Church in Zimbabwe*, Goodwood, South Africa: National Book Printers, 1981), 33.
- ³⁵ Chengetai J. M. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe*. (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996), 9.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Fabulous Moyo, *The Bible, the Bullet, and the Ballot*, (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 28.
- ³⁸ Kunonga, *Roots of the Zimbabwe Revolution*, 60.

- ³⁹ For further reading on the colonization of Zimbabwe and how missionaries helped in the imperial project of colonization of Zimbabwe, the author recommends Chengetai J. M Zvobgo's book, *A History of Christians Missions in Zimbabwe 1890 – 1939* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996) and Nathan Goto's *African and Missionary Partnership in Christian Mission: Rhodesia – Zimbabwe 1897-1968* (Kearney, NE: Morris Publishing Co., 2006).
- ⁴⁰ Goto, *African and Missionary Partnership in Christian Mission*, 14.
- ⁴¹ Henry V. Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 202), 3.
- ⁴² Dodge, *Unpopular Missionary*, 60.
- ⁴³ Kunonga, *Roots of the Zimbabwe Revolution*, 62,
- ⁴⁴ Michael W. Goheen and Margaret O'Gara, "Mission and Unity: The Theological Dynamic of Comity" in *That the World May Believe: Essays on Mission and Unity* (Lanham: University Press, 2006), 85.
- ⁴⁵ John W. Z. Kurewa, *Drumbeats of Salvation in Africa: A Study of Biblical, Historical and Theological Foundations for the Ministry of Evangelism*, (Old Mutare: Africa University, 2007), 136.
- ⁴⁶ Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary*, 18.
- ⁴⁷ William Humbane, Interview by author, Mutare, May 7, 2014.
- ⁴⁸ Muzorewa, *Rise Up and Walk*, 44.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 116-117.
- ⁵¹ Goto, *African and Western Missionary Partnership in Christian Mission*, 107-114.
- ⁵² Ralph E. Dodge, *The Church and Integration*, (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, 1959), 10.
- ⁵³ William Humbane, Interview by author, Mutare, May 7, 2014.
- ⁵⁴ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 118.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Ralph E. Dodge, Letter to Friends, July 21, 1957.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 122.
- ⁵⁹ Ralph E. Dodge, Letter to Friends, August 13, 1957.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ Kurewa, *The Church in Mission*, 124.
- ⁶² Titus Presler wrote extensively about the camp meetings in Zimbabwe. The author refers the reader to Presler's book, *Transfigured Night: Mission and Culture in Zimbabwe's Vigil Movement* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 1999).
- ⁶³ Tumani Nyajeka wrote a book about the *Rukwadzano* or the Methodist Women's organization in Zimbabwe. To understand the history of the women's organization in Zimbabwe and its operations, the author refers the reader to Nyajeka's book, *The Unwritten Text: The Indigenous African Christian Women's Movement in Zimbabwe* (Mutare, ZW: Africa University Press, 2006).
- ⁶⁴ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, August 28, 1958.
- ⁶⁵ Irene Kabete a student at Asbury has done a research on the *Wabvuwi* and she is writing a dissertation on evangelistic import of the *Wabvuwi* music in Zimbabwe.
- ⁶⁶ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 125.
- ⁶⁷ Ralph Dodge, "Episcopal Address to the Southern Rhodesia Annual Conference," Old Mutare, 4-9 May, 1958.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Kenneth Shamu, Interview by author, May 5, 2014
- ⁷¹ Mungazi, *The Cross between Rhodesia and Zimbabwe*, 77.
- ⁷² Ibid., 52.
- ⁷³ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 126.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid.
- ⁷⁶ Muzorewa, *Rise Up and Walk*, 47.
- ⁷⁷ Eunice Dodge, Family Letter, September 30, 1958.
- ⁷⁸ Eunice Dodge, Family Letter, September 30, 1958.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.

- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 131.
- ⁸³ Eunice Dodge, Family Letter, October 19, 1958.
- ⁸⁴ Ralph Dodge, *The Church and Law and Order*, (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, 1960), 7.
- ⁸⁵ Ralph Dodge, "Memorandum to Methodist Missionaries in Southern Rhodesia," March 21, 1959.
- ⁸⁶ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Church and Integration*, (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, 1959), 5.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., 8-9.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., 11.
- ⁸⁹ Journal of the Rhodesia Annual Conference of the Methodist Church 1959, 353.
- ⁹⁰ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 128.
- ⁹¹ Ibid.
- ⁹² Ibid., 127.
- ⁹³ Ibid., 131.
- ⁹⁴ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 18 February, 1961.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., 139.
- ⁹⁶ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 28 May, 1960.
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- ⁹⁸ Ralph Dodge, *The Church and Stewardship* (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, 1960), 9-10.
- ⁹⁹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 144.
- ¹⁰⁰ Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, 264.
- ¹⁰¹ *The Official Journal of The Africa Central Conference of the Methodist Church*, (Nyadiri Methodist Center, Southern Rhodesia, August 20-29, 1960), 17
- ¹⁰² Ibid., 19.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid., 20.
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CHAPTER FIVE

GOD IS IN CONTROL (1961 – 1964)

The Beginning of the war of liberation in Angola

If the first four years of serving as a bishop had not been challenging enough for Bishop Dodge, his second quadrennium would begin with terribly disturbing news of events in Angola. For many years, Angolan peasants living near Portuguese coffee and cotton plantations were forced to work on the plantations. The plantations were often located in heavily concentrated areas of Protestant missions. Malanje, a town where the Methodist Church had two large mission centers, was surrounded by nearby cotton farms. There were also a lot of coffee plantations in the Dembos region, where Dodge had helped establish a new Methodist mission center in the town of Mufuque.

However, on January 3, 1961, Angolan peasants in Malanje began boycotting work on the cotton farms. In their demands, they insisted higher wages and better working conditions. Because villagers near the cotton farms were mandated to only grow cotton, without freedom to choose their own crops, the cotton was often sold at a very low price. As a result, the villagers not only began abandoning their cotton fields, but they refused to pay taxes on them. To preempt a response from the Portuguese government, which had always resorted to confiscating the villagers' livestock upon failure to pay, the villagers instead "killed their own livestock and burned their identification cards."¹

The situation escalated significantly and reached a point of disaster on January 4, 1961 when Portuguese government officials brutally responded to the cotton revolt by bombing the villages around the Malanje area. The bombings killed hundreds of people.² In response, on February 4, 1961, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)³ organized approximately one hundred militants in Luanda “armed with knives and clubs to attack a prison [Sao Paulo] and a police station with the hope of freeing political prisoners.”⁴ The daring raid resulted in the death of seven policemen and forty of the MPLA militants.⁵ No prisoner was freed as a result. The following day, as the Portuguese government held a funeral for the seven policemen, the Portuguese mobs randomly attacked Angolans living in the highly concentrated African neighborhoods. Again, on February 10, the MPLA militants attacked another prison to try to free some political prisoners, the Portuguese government responded even more brutally. When the smoke cleared, three hundred Africans had been killed.⁶

Following the February attacks in Luanda, on March 15, 1961 a full-fledged rebellion against Portuguese colonialism had erupted along the Congo – Angolan border, near Sao Salvador, that quickly further spread into the Dembos area. Organizers of the uprising would use witch-doctors to incite the people to revolt. Eunice writes,

The attacks by the Africans are explained by captured Africans who say: “It will make no difference to us if we die because we will come back to life on Independence Day.” Poor misled people! Witch-doctors have been selling little sticks which they claim will make those who hold them in their mouth invulnerable to bullets.⁷

As more Africans in these areas attacked Portuguese settlers in small towns, administrative posts and plantations, over one thousand Portuguese were killed in the attacks. Since the uprisings had taken the Portuguese government by such a surprise, their own response to them would surprise world leaders. Twenty thousand Angolans were killed as the Portuguese government retaliated with the full armaments of its air force, dropping bombs indiscriminately on African villages. With the situation spiraling ever more so out of control, 200,000 men, women and children escaped to the Congo as refugees⁸. Furthermore, to the Portuguese, because the uprisings had initially begun in areas where Protestants were heavily concentrated, it “confirmed the long-standing suspicions of the Portuguese that Protestant missions were subversive.”⁹

With open rebellion taking place in northwest Angola, Protestant missions in the area began to shut down. The long established Methodist churches in the Dembos region were not spared closure. Two weeks after the attacks in Dembos, during the Easter week of March 29, the Methodist mission center in Luanda was attacked by Portuguese mobs. Because the United States ambassador, Mr. Adlai Stevenson, had criticized the Portuguese colonial policy as the cause for the uprisings, the event began as a protest against the ambassador. They pushed the ambassador’s car into the Luanda Bay and with the Methodist Center commonly known as the “American Mission” only a mile away from the American consulate, the protest turned violent as the Portuguese mobs started throwing rocks. The mobs would go on to destroy the church as well as several other buildings around the Methodist center. The next day, an editorial in a daily newspaper in Luanda “implied that the Methodist Church was responsible for the revolt in the north of Angola and so the mob was justified in stoning the mission.”¹⁰

Back in Zimbabwe, Bishop Dodge had just returned from Johannesburg to conduct a funeral of the Rev. Lilburn Adkins, a Zimbabwe missionary. Unfortunately, Rev. Adkins had been attacked by robbers who had broken into his home before murdering the missionary. His wife, Florence, survived the assault but remained heavily injured. On February 18, 1961, Eunice Dodge would write, “Our anguish is greatest because neither Lilburn nor Florence could have had an enemy in the world. They have been such sweet and kind people. Florence attended Lilburn’s funeral, broken arm in sling, courage intact, and Christianity showing.”¹¹

Bishop Dodge was at his Harare offices on March 30 when the phone rang and William Humbane answered. It was a call from London. As Dodge took the call, he was put on hold as the operator connected the line to Lisbon. The operator in Lisbon then connected him to Luanda. A phone call from Luanda to Harare a distance of less than 1,500 miles in the 1960s had to go through Lisbon, then to London and finally to Harare.

Finally, on the other end of the line was John Shryock, a missionary in Luanda who was calling Bishop Dodge a day after the Luanda mission station was attacked:

Bishop Dodge, we want to tell you that last night a mob of whites accompanied by police came up to the mission and broke all the windows in the church and then went out and completely destroyed the dispensary. No one was hurt, but we’re all pretty worried. We are wondering if you could possibly come over and confer with us.¹²

As the call concluded, the bishop assured Rev. Shryock that he would be on the next plane to Angola. However, before he hang up the phone Dodge told John, “Tell everyone to remain calm; God is still on the throne.”¹³

Arriving in Luanda on Monday, April 3, Dodge began to assess the situation of the church in Luanda and the Dembos area. He was deeply disturbed by both what he saw and from eyewitness accounts of the events. The missionaries who had fled the war were all gathered in Luanda. Dodge encouraged them “to seek Divine guidance.”¹⁴ In a letter dated April 27, 1961, Eunice eloquently and powerfully describes the reality of the situation:

Anguish
Nationalist determination
Government desperation
Organized revolt
Life or death struggle
Atrocities¹⁵

The events in Angola had gained worldwide attention. Missionaries began to fear that their families in the United States would worry for their safety. To complicate matters, the Portuguese government was now censoring all correspondence leaving the country. In the meeting with the missionaries, the group agreed that the Board of Missions needed to be informed firsthand about the dire situation in Angola so that it could make a decision about the welfare of the missionaries in Angola.

In her April 27 letter, Eunice gloomily details the situation of the Methodist Church in Angola:

It's not a pretty picture. War never is. And it is real war in Angola. There has been nothing so brutal nor bloody in all the history of Africa... Some of our good friends in Angola are among those killed. Some missionary wives and children were evacuated from Angola after Ralph saw the situation. Some are in the Transvaal; some in Rhodesia; some in USA. We

hear that almost all of the Methodist pastors of two districts are either in prison or killed. In fact, they say 75% of all the pastors of the whole conference are in prison. And on top of that number are all those who are dead. Who is left to minister to the people? How many are there?¹⁶

Having organized the evacuation of missionary wives and children, Dodge purchased an airline ticket to New York, via Brussels, in order to report to the Board on Missions the happenings in Angola. Melvin Blake, who had succeeded Dodge at the Board of Missions in New York, received the bishop in the United States. As Dodge briefed him on the situation in Angola, it was agreed that the United Nations should be informed of the events. For two days, Blake and Dodge attended meetings at the United Nations with some of the world's most influential people. They informed them about the escalating political and humanitarian crisis in Angola. Bishop Dodge would later go on record to say:

There is a time for the Christian to stand up and proclaim justice from the housetops, even though he knows his residence permit may be revoked. Some missionaries, after years of extreme caution in such matter, faced just such an issue in speaking up about the conditions in Angola following the revolt in 1961.¹⁷

Once Bishop Dodge had done all he could from New York, he returned to Zimbabwe in time for the Rhodesia Annual Conference at Old Mutare (May 1-7, 1961). As he presided over the proceedings in Zimbabwe, one can only imagine how much of his thoughts were back in Angola. While he had been away in New York, the situation in Angola had further deteriorated. He learned that some of the Methodist missionaries had

been arrested and put in prison. In response to the rebellion, the Portuguese government had arrested four Methodist missionaries: Marion Washington Way Jr., Wendell Lee Golden, Frederick Charles Brancel and Edwin LeMaster. Aware that the arrests of these Methodist missionaries could cause a diplomatic problem with the United States, the Portuguese government went on to issue the following statement:

Overriding reasons of national security made the measure imperative. In fact documentation and testimony collected by the Portuguese authorities did not leave the least doubt of the connivance of these missionaries with groups of terrorists, their participation in meeting of a political character, their instigation of acts contrary to national sovereignty, their implication in the publication and circulation of subversive pamphlets and their help in recruiting of individuals to join the terrorist movement.¹⁸

The four missionaries languished in a Luanda prison for weeks until finally being transferred to Lisbon. Ultimately they were released, however, not before their residence permits to visit or live in Angola were revoked. A fifth Methodist missionary, Raymond Noah, was also arrested and expelled from Angola.

One of the charges against the Methodist missionaries, as stated in the Portuguese government statement, accused them of helping to recruit people to join a terrorist movement. The terrorist movement that the Portuguese government was referring to was the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). After the MPLA's organized uprisings in Luanda failed to free the political prisoners, and resulted in many people being killed, there was a consensus within the MPLA that new leadership was needed to implement their vision. As a result, the group elected Dr. Antonio Agostinho Neto as president of the MPLA.

Consequently, Antonio Agostinho Neto was Methodist. His father, the Reverend Agostinho Pedro Neto had been Dodge's neighbor and associate pastor at Luanda mission station when Dodge first arrived in Angola in 1936. Agostinho Neto developed a close relationship with Dodge in Angola. Furthermore, at one point along the way, Agostinho had worked for Dodge in Angola, earning a small wage which he used to buy books for his education. Dodge writes:

Even as a boy, Neto was quiet, reserved, a bit shy, but always correct and businesslike...Antonio always got good marks in school and progressed from one grade to the next with yearly regularity.... The pattern of the Portuguese was to admit the African students in the same school with the Europeans, but thin them out especially in the upper grades. Antonio was one of the few who was able to complete his education in Angola.¹⁹

Agostinho graduated from high school in Luanda in 1944 with a desire to study medicine in order to become a doctor, however there was no sufficient college in Luanda for him to attend. As a result, Dodge recommended Agostinho in 1947 to the Board of Missions for a Crusade scholarship to study medicine and political science in Lisbon at the University of Lisbon. By 1960, Agostinho returned to Angola to begin work at a government hospital as a doctor. When Neto was elected to lead the MPLA in 1961, the Portuguese government interpreted the Methodist funding he had received for his education as a sign that the Methodist missionaries themselves had recruited him, trained him, and prepared him to lead a liberation movement deemed by the government as a terrorist organization.

Neto's rise in the MPLA leadership, coupled with the uprisings in Malanje, Dembos, and Luanda (where there was heavy Methodist presence), led the Portuguese

government to treat the Methodist Church as a threat. This formed the basis of its brutal retaliation against the Methodist Church. Methodist pastors and leaders were arrested and several were killed.

In the Dembos area alone, where Dodge had first initiated the successful planting of Methodist churches, seventeen pastors were killed, including some of their families. In the Malanje area, seven pastors were killed. The annual conference lay leader, Mr. Joaquim Ramos Duarte, was one of the ones killed.²⁰ Many more local church leaders were also killed.²¹ Dodge writes:

The Portuguese murdered pastors and teachers most of them by bombs from the air, but some by gun at point-blank range. All told, probably a fourth of the leaders of the Methodist Church, all defenseless civilians, were killed. Many others took refuge in the deep forests trying to make their way to the Congo.²²

By April 11, 1963, the Portuguese government issued a decree to restrict the annual conference meetings of the Methodist Church on the basis that in the past meetings, “heavy political content were expressed.”²³ Protestant missionaries were restricted to stay in their assigned areas. To complicate things, if the missionaries desired to travel outside their administrative areas, they were further required to apply for travel permits from the Portuguese Political Police (PIDE). As a result, Methodist work and ministry in Angola was severely affected by the restrictions. After his visit to Angola in 1961, as the March 15 uprisings were breaking out, Dodge was no longer permitted to visit two out of the three countries where he served as the presiding bishop, Angola and Mozambique. Dodge writes:

The political tensions were so great in Angola that no general meetings of any kind could be held. Thus, there were no Annual Conference sessions and my administrative assistant, Rev. Harry Andreassen, dealt individually with pastors when problems arose²⁴

In his book *Angola Awake*, Sid Gilchrist, a missionary with the United Church of Canada who called the Dembos region the Methodist area observed that after the uprisings in the region, “the church must be largely underground in the Methodist area as a whole.”²⁵

Undoubtedly, as a bishop, the situation in Angola was more than troubling. Yet, leaders are often remembered by how they handle difficult and complicated situations. Concerning the 1961 events and situation in Angola, Bishop Dodge writes, “I am subdued, but not dismayed, concerned but not pessimistic; bewildered and hopeless in my own human frailty – but confident in God’s grace.”²⁶

While it would take the bishop several months to comprehend and reflect on what had happened in Angola, writing in the November issue of *The Christian Century*, Dodge would ultimately conclude that the killings in Angola were acts of terrorism. While the Portuguese had classified the African uprisings as acts of terrorism, Bishop Dodge believed the Portuguese response was the actual culprit. While Dodge did not ignore the causes of the uprising or assume that the protestors were not blameless, he believed the Portuguese response is what surprised him the most. In his opinion, the Portuguese wanted to eradicate the Methodist Church’s education program in Angola. In *The Christian Century* Bishop Dodge writes,

The Methodist mission center of Luanda, the capital city, suffered a mob attack under the police escort; this was followed by others elsewhere in Luanda and in other parts of north central Angola. Many Methodist churches and schools were destroyed by white terrorists. For many years Portuguese plantation owners resented Protestant school which, they said, brought about a reduction in the number of laborers. Resentment had been rising against our education program in which a limited number of Africans were preparing for university training and even smaller number were already studying in Portugal and elsewhere. The general wave of terrorism which followed the March revolts in the north provided an opportunity for the embittered Europeans to “get even” with Protestants for limiting the supply of cheap labor through an effective if limited education program.²⁷

In the meantime, both Dodge and Eunice had joined the Courtesy Campaign. The organization pledged “to treat all people as human individuals without distinction as to race, creed, or nationality.”²⁸ A particular promise of the Courtesy Campaign appealed to a more practical and grassroots approach to change. For example, if a member entered a store and the store clerk ignored others who were already waiting (because of their color), the Courtesy Campaign members would refuse to be served until those waiting had received service.

The Safari to Learning and push for transfer of responsibility

By February 1961, Dodge used his time in Zimbabwe to strengthen his higher education program initiative. This time around, the student selection process was more organized. The education committee would officially name the program Safari to Learning. Although the first group of students had already been sent, Safari to Learning

was officially launched at the 1961 annual conference at Old Mutare. For Dodge, the education was a critical component to the church's mission and vision as he writes: "education is not an enemy of piety. A person can be deeply spiritual and at the same time well educated."²⁹

The goals of the program were stated in Eunice Dodge's February 18, 1961 letter:

Ralph is launching a "SAFARI TO LEARNING" with the aim of sending overseas for more advanced training fifty Africans per year, chosen from our promising Methodist young people. When he first began correspondence on the matter, we wondered if he was being too ambitious in aiming fifty scholarships every year; but we are getting more and more hopeful that things will work out well. Full scholarships are being offered in many colleges of the United States and also in Europe and Asia. Chiefly, the problem now is for transportation; but offers in that direction are coming along, too. Therefore, many eager young folks in Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique are making plans to go overseas for college courses. When well-trained, those young people can be important leaders tomorrow. Some of you know about the students already abroad from our area. There are forty-five at present – some in Portugal, some in Great Britain, some in India and some in the U.S.A.³⁰

With the number of colleges in the United States participating in Bishop Dodge's Safari to Learning program in 1961, the initiative was able to impact more students. However, Morningside College, having admitted most of the students from Zimbabwe in 1960, did not admit any students that year. Instead, the students selected in 1961 were admitted in many more colleges throughout the United States such as: Asbury and Union Colleges in Kentucky; Southwestern College in Kansas; Huston-Tillotson College in Texas; America University in Washington DC; Warren Wilson College in North Carolina; Nebraska Wesleyan University in Nebraska; Kendall College and McMurray

College in Illinois; and St. Lawrence College in New York. This time around, married students were able to travel together as families.

Eunice probably expressed what her husband was feeling when he prayed for the program at a time the Methodist Church in Angola was experiencing what Dodge described as “the treatment of the early Apostles in the first century.”³¹ She writes:

Yes, we have to know the heart-breaks of the world; nevertheless, if one looks for light shining behind the dark clouds which cover the face of the earth, it is there. It is important to look for the shafts of light; for most of us are still afraid of the dark. And FEAR is just as contagious as measles; discouragement is as catching as the chicken pox; and pessimism spreads like the whooping cough. But, aren't HOPE and FAITH also capable of being spread around.³²

In these words, Eunice articulated her husband's feelings concerning the situation in Angola. In the midst of the sorrowful Angola situation, the education program was as John the Gospel writer says the ‘light shining in the darkness, and the darkness could not overcome it’ (John 1:5).

The Zimbabwe Annual Conference of 1961 proved to be a significant one for the church as it sought to become more Zimbabwean. Up to 1961, the Board on Missions owned all the properties of the church in Zimbabwe. There was nothing the church could do on any property without the approval of the Board of Missions in New York. Dodge's pilot project of racial integration at Nyadiri had experienced complications because the Board on Missions had not approved that the missionary houses be used by non-missionary workers, all of whom were Africans. As a result, the committee on Christian social concerns desired for the Nyadiri mission to be a multiracial and integrated mission

station. In order to do so, it was recommended that “title deeds to all property in Southern Rhodesia in the name of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church be transferred to the Rhodesia Annual Conference of the Methodist Church.”³³

Following the Zimbabwe Annual Conference it became apparent to Dodge that he would no longer be permitted to visit either Angola or Mozambique. Moreover, the Board of Missions transferred most of the American missionaries from Angola and some were placed in Zimbabwe. Only a few European missionaries, such as Rev. Harry Peter Andreassen, would remain in Angola. As Bishop Dodge’s administrative assistant in Angola, Rev. Andreassen kept Bishop Dodge informed about the work of the church. In Mozambique, Bishop Dodge appointed Rev. Escrivao Anglaze Zunguze as an administrative assistant. Both Andreassen and Zunguze would travel to Zimbabwe to meet with Bishop Dodge to confer on important matters concerning the church. As a result, much of Dodge’s time and attention would focus on the work of the church in Zimbabwe.

Regarding the family, everyone in the Dodge household was doing well. In a March 12, 1962 letter, Dodge and Eunice would write, “So far, we find 1962 kinder than 1961.”³⁴ The couple was delighted to have their daughter, Lois, who had graduated from Yale University in 1960, join them in Zimbabwe. Lois began working at the Old Mutare mission station where she served as the school librarian and taught Latin and French at the high school. Meanwhile, Peggy was in high school at Queen Elizabeth School for girls in Harare, allowing her to stay with her parents in Mt. Pleasant. Dodge himself had begun the year by attending the Shona Language School at Nyakatsapa mission station, approximately thirty miles north of Old Mutare mission station. All Methodist

missionaries to Zimbabwe were required to attend the Shona Language School at Nyakatsapa before assuming their duties on assigned locations. Given that he had more time to do so, Dodge decided to enroll in the school for continuing education. As bishop, he had come to realize the importance of learning the Shona language as a missionary in Zimbabwe.

As for Eunice, she was enjoying her work as the editor of the *Africa Christian Advocate* and as president of the *Rukwadzano RweWadzimai* (Methodist Women's Organization in Zimbabwe). Clifford, who had gone to college (to please his parents) dropped out of college and enlisted in the army and was based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Edward Jr., who would graduate from Indiana University Medical School with an M.D in May of that year, would move to California to begin his surgery residency at Los Angeles County Hospital.

In April of 1962, Dodge would preside at the 24th session of the Zimbabwe Annual Conference, held at Nyadiri Methodist Center (April 23-29). While the 1961 Annual Conference had recommended that the Board of Missions transfer title deeds of properties to the Zimbabwe Annual Conference, resolutions made at the 1962 conference aimed, with the approval of Dodge, to better clarify the relationship between Board of Missions and the Methodist Church. The bishop wanted the Board of Missions to serve more in a partnership role in its relationship to the Zimbabwe Annual Conference. Dodge hoped for a complete transfer of responsibility from the Board of Missions to the Zimbabwe Annual Conference.

On transfer of responsibility, the annual conference resolved “That plans be made for the speedy transfer of responsibility from the missionaries to the African personnel. The missionary should welcome the opportunity of relinquishing his responsibility and the African should be capable to assume it and be willing to enter into the necessary discipline.”³⁵ Bishop Dodge was already looking ahead to a future time when the students of the conference who were sent overseas for higher education would return to Zimbabwe. He recognized that these students were going to return to Zimbabwe well prepared to work alongside the missionaries and eventually replace them. These changes were not to be carried out without consultation for it was further resolved “That the change of responsibility from missionary to the African be determined by the Bishop and the Annual Conference and its agencies. We suggest that Cabinet be the agency which makes official the change of responsibility. In some cases the role of the missionary ends; in other cases it gives him or her the opportunity to explore and open new fields.”³⁶

In order for the Zimbabwe Annual Conference to pursue the transfer of responsibilities, it was resolved “That every missionary should transfer his or her membership to the local church, conference on the field and actively serve with the Africans where he or she is most needed.”³⁷ On racial discrimination the Annual Conference resolved “That Conference should make it clear as to whose responsibility it is to “state categorically” the church’s position against racial discrimination, or any other harmful discrimination.... That the Christian Social Concerns Committee be specifically charged with the duty to guard against any form of racial discrimination in our conference.”³⁸

These and other resolutions helped to redefine the role of missionaries in the Methodist Church. In 1962, there were 170 missionaries in the country. The number includes missionaries who had been evacuated from Angola and the Congo. Because some stories alleging racial discrimination reached the bishop, he wanted to ensure that the missionaries understood the position of the church on the matter. He had heard stories of missionaries who would not allow their children to come into contact with Africans. Furthermore, students at Old Mutare complained to Bishop Dodge one day about a missionary's wife at Old Mutare who "would not allow any Africans to sit on her chairs. If you sit, she will spray where you have been sitting."³⁹ An interview with one of the African leaders who served as conference lay leader confirmed that the story had happened to him. Bishop Dodge's stance on racial discrimination in church was that "No one wants to come into the Christian church on a basis of inferiority; he either comes as an equal and enters into the warmth of fellowship, or he remains outside."⁴⁰

At the 1962 Annual Conference Bishop Dodge appointed Rev. Jonah Kawadza as his administrative assistant. Shortly after the annual conference, a group of missionaries requested a meeting with Dodge. The meeting took place on a Saturday at the Bible House in Harare. When the bishop arrived at the Bible House conference room, 10 of the leading missionaries in Zimbabwe were already seated. At the head of the table was Rev. Kare Erickson, a Norwegian Methodist Missionary and principal of Epworth Theological School in Harare. He motioned for the bishop to sit next to him. After a prayer was said Rev. Kare Ericksson addressed the room:

Bishop, we've asked to meet with you because we're concerned about the future of our church. In matters of discipline we feel that you are now undermining our authority. In a number of specific instances recently you have taken side of Africans rather than backing us. We are concerned about this. To refresh your memory, different ones of us will recall certain specific incidents.⁴¹

Dr. Marvin Piburn, the Medical Superintendent at Nyadiri Hospital and Bishop Dodge's fellow Iowan shared. "Well, you recall the second year orderlies being trained at Nyadiri Hospital. When they disobeyed some rules, I dismissed them and they came to you. Do you remember this? You put undue pressure on us to reinstate them. At least you should have heard our side of the story before making any request. You are undermining our authority."⁴²

As each one of the ten missionaries spoke, pointing out to various incidents where they felt the bishop had undermined their authority, it became obvious to Dodge that the missionaries had come prepared. It was also apparent that the resolutions at the Annual Conference had left many missionaries uncomfortable. Bishop Dodge would listen intently as each missionary spoke, however, he felt like he was knocked "on the carpet – a soft loving carpet, but nevertheless a carpet."⁴³

In the case of Dr. Piburn, there had been three orderlies (nurse aids) in training at Nyadiri Hospital whom Dr. Piburn had dismissed from their training because of various mischiefs. The three students walked or they alleged to have walked from Nyadiri to Harare a distance of about two hundred miles to see the bishop to present their cases. When they arrived at the office, they were tired with swollen feet from their journey. Upon seeing their condition, the bishop ensured they were fed when they complained of

hunger. When Bishop Dodge listened to their stories, they apologized for their mischiefs, while begging the bishop for a second chance. The bishop then wrote a letter to Dr. Piburn asking his fellow Iowan to reinstate the students.⁴⁴

For Dodge, the meeting with the missionaries was important because it allowed him to see where the missionaries were in terms of his education program. He had come face-to-face with opposition from within his own missionary colleagues. Not all missionaries opposed his Safari to Learning program, but a majority did, for they opposed it not because of the education it brought the Africans, but because it threatened the future of their jobs as missionaries, especially now that the Annual Conference had resolved to transfer responsibilities from the missionaries to the Africans. Dodge realized what he encountered in his meeting with the missionaries was anxiety. Undoubtedly, he respected them for sharing their grievances with him. Yet because he had written articles encouraging his fellow missionaries to welcome and listen to criticism; he was now being criticized for his administrative style and agenda. True to his spirit of welcoming and listening to criticism, Dodge says,

I was deeply moved because I respected so much of those missionaries who had taken time to come to Salisbury [Harare] and share their concerns with me. In general they agreed with the policy of African promotion; they were not always in agreement with my way of doing it. Perhaps I was not balanced in my judgments; perhaps I was learning too far from center, responding too freely to the aspirations of the adults and listening too much to the complaints of the students.⁴⁵

When the meeting was over they bid farewell to each other. Bishop Dodge got into his Opel Rekord and sat there for a few minutes, unable to turn on the ignition. As a leader, it is one thing to criticize others, but it was another thing to be on the receiving end of the criticism. Regardless of the grievances, it still stung. Bishop Dodge conceded, “I was stunned. Never had I felt so completely emotionally drained. After driving slowly home to a waiting lunch where I was uncommunicative, I put on my work clothes and spent the afternoon imbibing energy from the plants of the garden.”⁴⁶



Bishop Ralph Dodge, Lois, Mrs. Dodge and Peggy in Harare, 1962.

In regards to tobacco, the Methodist Church in took a very strong position against smoking, selling and growing tobacco as compared to other churches such as the Anglican and British Methodists. The early missionaries who came to Zimbabwe took a pietistic approach to the question of tobacco and alcohol. They were held strong

conviction that the use of tobacco was unchristian and because of their conviction, they taught African Methodists to abstain from smoking and drinking alcohol. By the time Dodge arrived in Zimbabwe there was a “very strong aversion to not only the use of tobacco but also to having contact whatsoever with the noxious weed.”⁴⁷

To join the *Rukwadzano* (Women’s Organization) and *Vabvuwi* (Men’s Organization), new members were required to promise that they would refrain from using tobacco in any form, would not work in tobacco fields, and would not permit the growing of tobacco in their own gardens or fields. Workers in Methodist centers were required to agree to abstain from using tobacco. Ministerial candidates and evangelists were required to sign statements that did not use tobacco before they were admitted into the ministry of the church.

The problem came when some missionaries who did not hold such pietistic convictions on tobacco and alcohol were seen smoking in their homes or outside the mission centers. And when Africans were caught smoking they were disciplined and missionaries who smoked were not held to the same standards. This prompted Bishop Dodge to write *The Church and Tobacco*. His views on tobacco were moderate, practical and based on stewardship of the body. Dodge stated that he had never smoked. He writes,

It is fairly accepted at the present time that there is a definite connection between cancer and the use of tobacco especially cigarettes. The smoking-cancer relationship is definite... There is question that the use of tobacco in any form is a tremendous economic waste. Millions of dollars are spent each year on cigarettes and other forms of tobacco leaving nothing constructive to justify the expenditure... The use of narcotics is habit forming. It is for this reason that many people find it impossible to stop smoking once they have established the habit. Man, who should be master

of his own body and mind thus becomes a slave to narcotize – that injurious element contained in tobacco. Man is never at his best in developing his powers when he is slave to any habit...The human body should be the sanctified dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore be temperate in all things so that our bodies are kept healthy, strong, and pure for maximum efficiency and usefulness in Christian service.⁴⁸

By June of 1962, Bishop Dodge and the education committee were busy working to sending twenty more students to go to the United States to begin school in September. Such as before, many of the selected candidates were married with children. However, for the first time, four of the candidates were women, three of which were unmarried. Altogether, it was a large group of fifty people. Most of the students would ultimately travel to Morningside College in Iowa while a few would head to Bishop Dodge's alma mater at Taylor University in Indiana.

However, as the necessary travel documents were accumulated and processed, the bishop learned of the death of Jasper Machiri, one of the students at Morningside College in Iowa. Jasper, the son of the conference's pastor, had sustained an injury during a physical education class that required surgery. During the procedure on June 6, Jasper's heart unexpectedly quit, and the emergency resuscitation failed. Dodge had the difficult task of informing his family of the death. Upon hearing the news, Jasper's parents, Rev. Machiri and his wife of the Gandanzara Circuit, were devastated. Rev. Machiri, who had witnessed missionaries die and be buried in Zimbabwe cemeteries at mission centers, was overwhelmed at the thought of his son being buried in a foreign land so far away in the United States.

Jasper's story was particularly tragic to his family and the churches of Zimbabwe. The young man had left for the United States with his wife, Alma, and two of his six children. Having received a scholarship through the Crusade Scholarship program, his wife and children had been sponsored by individual churches in the United States. Following the man's death, to bring some kind of hope out of the despair, the bishop and the Board on Missions asked the sponsoring church to finance the repatriation of his body to Zimbabwe as well as the airline tickets of his family. In a letter to friends dated June 25, Eunice would describe the magnificent reception for the young man's funeral:

It was the largest funeral service Ralph ever held; an estimated 2,000 people crowded into and around the Old Umtali Methodist Church. We knew Jasper Machiri had many friends and that he came from a large, well-known family; therefore, we expected a large funeral but we did envision anything like the crowd which came. In spite of all the grief which was surely felt, there was not the wailing often heard at African funerals. But people with whom we talked said things like: "it's a miracle! Why, even when missionaries die out here away from their families, their bodies are never sent back home! And they did this for an African. At the airport, three days earlier, more people had come to see the coffin arrive than had come two days before to meet the widow and her children. People just had to see for themselves that this miracle really happened.

The next Sunday at his church, we heard that one minister prayed, "Oh God, bless our bishop; he takes care of the Africans even when they die overseas!" ... Sending so many students from Africa to get training abroad has made a very big impression on the church people and no-church people alike; but I believe that sending back Jasper's body made an even bigger impact.⁴⁹

Indeed, as bishop of the Methodist Church, Dodge was asked to do many funerals. Sometimes the funerals were of high profile men and women, both clergy and laity. In mid-August of the same year, he was asked to do a funeral of Dr. Tichafa Samuel

Parirenyatwa (1927-1962), a Methodist and a leading figure in the liberation and nationalist politics in Zimbabwe. Dr. Parirenyatwa, the first black medical doctor in Zimbabwe educated in South Africa at Fort Hare University and University of Witwatersrand, resigned his job as a medical doctor in 1961 to enter into politics. He joined Joshua Nkomo's National Democratic Party (NDP), after Edgar Whitehead, the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, had banned the African National Congress (ANC) in 1959.

However, the NDP as a party was short lived because it too was banned after Dr. Parirenyatwa joined. By January of 1962, Joshua Nkomo and Dr. Parirenyatwa formed the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in which the doctor became its vice president. In an unfortunate event, Dr. Parirenyatwa was killed in a train crash when a speeding train collided with his vehicle as he was on his way to a meeting in Bulawayo. The car itself was dragged for several meters leading to Dr. Parirenyatwa's death. "The government claimed that it was train-car collision, but the African people claimed it was murder."⁵⁰ It would be at the high-profile funeral for Dr. Parirenyatwa on August 18, 1962, that the bishop would meet Zimbabwe's liberation movement icons such as Joshua Nkomo, Robert Mugabe, Leopold Takawira, Ndabaningi Sithole, Nathan Shamuyarira and Josiah Chinamano. As a result, Dodge would develop a personal relationship with several of the significant nationalist figures. However, doing so came with risks as it would begin to place him in the crosshairs of the colonial government's attention.

Not long after Dr. Parirenyatwa's funeral, Dodge visited the United States ahead of the group of students heading there for their studies. He traveled through Europe to meet with students studying there, motivating them in their work and updating them on

the development of events in their respective countries. As their bishop, he cared greatly for these students and their future, encouraging them to keep in touch.

Bishop Dodge at the State Department in Washington DC

Bishop Dodge arrived in the United States on September 18, 1962. He traveled to Fort Dodge in Iowa first to visit his mother and celebrate her 86th birthday together. The visit was a long time coming. He had not spent time with her since Dodge lived in Ridgewood, New Jersey. From there, he visited Ed Jr. and his family in Los Angeles. Edward Jr., who had married Nancy DeLay from St. Petersburg, Florida in 1957, had two boys. He enjoyed the opportunity to play with his grandsons and like any grandfather, writing to Eunice, he exclaims, "It was harder to leave Randy and Jeff than it had ever been to leave our own children."⁵¹ From Los Angeles he would head east to visit Clifford in Kentucky.

While it was wonderful to see his family, the visit home also had business to attend. He had hoped to visit the State Department in Washington DC to meet with the President Kennedy's Secretary of State, Mr. David Dean Rusk, to present and lobby on the Angolan situation. Dodge writes:

Many people of Africa under colonial rule looked hopefully to the United States for help in their struggles for independence. We had been a colony, too. We knew what it meant to be free. Our avowed international policy, as outlined in the Atlantic Charter, affirmed the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live. We Americans had developed from the colonial status to be one of the great nations of the world. All colonial people who read history admired the United States. It was natural for the people of Africa to look to the United States for help in their struggle for self-government.

It was distressing to see us developing an American policy which was based on short-term self-interest and which disregarded any thought of avowed national idealism. Economic opportunism for the favored few at the top seemed to be the dominant factor of our foreign policy...⁵²

In New York, Dodge met with Melvin Blake. At the Board of Missions, he was joined by Dr. Antonio Agostinho Neto, now the leader of the MPLA. It is not clear if the meeting itself was planned or more of a spontaneous event. However, Melvin Blake and Dr. Neto had known each other well from their work in Angola. Following the New York visit, Dodge planned to travel on an overnight reservation via the Pennsylvania Railroad to Washington DC. Dr. Neto, who told Dodge that he too needed to go to Washington, appreciated an opportunity to travel alongside the bishop. Having agreed that the two would meet at Penn Station on 34th Street, Dodge would ultimately cancel his reservation upon learning that Dr. Neto had failed to reserve a seat on the train.

As a result, the two decided to travel to Washington via a Greyhound Bus. The lengthy journey by bus provided plenty of opportunity for the two to talk. Dodge writes, “Dr. Neto was eager to learn about America. At first we chatted amiably in Portuguese and then, tired, we dozed off.”⁵³ Arriving at Union Station in Washington early in the morning, the two men shared a taxi to the Dodge House Hotel, located near Capitol Hill. However, because the Dodge House Hotel was fully booked, they ended up booking two rooms across the street at the Bellevue Hotel. Meeting for breakfast at nine the morning, the men planned their activities for the day. When they agreed that they needed to find a better hotel, Dr. Neto replied, “I don’t have much money. Hotels are very expensive here.”⁵⁴

Nevertheless, following the breakfast, the bishop secured two rooms at the Dodge House for the coming night. After having moved the belongings from the Bellevue to the Dodge House and also paying for both rooms, he left Dr. Neto at the hotel and left for his appointment at the State Department. However, the visit did not prove to be as helpful as Bishop Dodge had hoped. Overall, Bishop Dodge was disappointed for the department's lack of understanding of the situation in Angola. He writes, "The State Department felt the Portuguese were firmly in control, and it would be impossible to break that control through revolutionary action. Therefore, the United States supplied the Portuguese, their NATO allies, with money and arms so that they could continue to maintain their colonial domain in Africa, irrespective of its oppressive nature."⁵⁵

While the visit did not go as planned, he was glad to at least attempt to share his perspective with the administration. It was all he could do. Returning to his hotel, he wrote a few letters to his friends in Indiana to introduce Dr. Neto. With the letters in his hand, he knocked at Dr. Neto's hotel room. However, when the door was opened, the room was filled reporters interviewing him about the situation in Angola. Dr. Neto interrupted his interview to introduce Bishop Dodge. The two men would share one more dinner before bidding each other farewell the next morning. Dodge would head back to New York in order to prepare to depart for Zimbabwe while Dr. Neto went back to Indiana. The two men would not meet again until Dodge was in Leopoldville, Congo, after Dr. Neto had established the MPLA headquarters and was fighting for Angola's independence with support from Cuba and Russia.

During the bishop's trip to the United States, several important developments had taken shape back in Zimbabwe. Edgar Whitehead had banned the ZAPU and was

beginning to incarcerate its leaders. When some of the high school students at Old Mutare protested the banning of ZAPU and subsequent incarceration of its members, they formed a march from Old Mutare to the city. In retaliation, the Rhodesian government responded quickly, sending in troops in order to send the students back to the mission center. When the police, with the support of the army, inquired to arrest all the boys in the high school, the headmaster intervened by negotiating with the police to let them deal with the protests internally. When the headmaster wanted to expel the ring leaders of the protest, Dodge's response from the United States was, "Don't expel students if you can possibly avoid it."⁵⁶

Things were indeed heating up in Zimbabwe. With the political storm and uncertainty sweeping through the cities, mission centers, towns and villages in 1962, the Methodists in Zimbabwe flocked to the Camp Meetings. In describing the events, Eunice writes:

Have you ever heard five thousand people singing and praying all night? It's an experience I'll never forget. Not just one night... every night and all day long of the camp. The theme song of this camp turned out to be "The Old Time Religion." In Shona Hymnal, the gospel song has 16 verses [*Ngerutendo Rukuru 187 muNgoma*], but the women made up dozens more during that camp meeting... I think the real reason for the popularity of the song is that people are clinging to their Christian faith during the political storms of these days. It must have been like an oasis – that camp – to which the people had come from all the troubled villages. They tried to forget everything else in renewing and strengthening their hold on the "Old Time Religion."

The morning I talked to the crowd which assembled in the out-door meeting place, it began to rain before I had finished. Women pulled scarves over their heads, hunched around their shoulders, covered their babies, and few raised umbrellas; but no body left. I was not sure if I should continue or not, so I brought my talk to a close as soon as I could.

The women knelt there in the drizzle and prayed, often face lifted to the skies. None chose that time to depart, they prayed. Not comfort, not things, not clothes, nor even health – nothing mattered except getting through to God! Would that the whole world could become so earnest about seeking God!⁵⁷

In her husband's absence, Eunice felt it critically important for her to attend the camp meetings to show solidarity with her African brothers and sisters. While some of the missionaries were not happy about Bishop Dodge's missional goals, Eunice experienced firsthand the love, and prayers of the Africans. She would recall how the experience of the Camp Meeting was a soothing experience. The event had helped her personally deal with what happening in Zimbabwe when she returned to Harare.

In a letter, she writes about a "white crack-pot" who called their home phone number and went on a tirade about "how Americans are always counselling Southern Rhodesians on internal matters. The man suggested that Bishop Dodge should use his influence in America, should protest the injustice in Mississippi, should defend rights of the under-privileged in his own land..."⁵⁸ She realized that the experience of the camp meeting had helped her deal with the stress of uncomfortable phone calls such as this one in the absence of her husband.

By the time Dodge returned to Zimbabwe on December 23, 1962, there was already a new government in Zimbabwe. Edgar Whitehead's party, the United Federal Party, was defeated in a general election by the re-energized, far right Rhodesia Front. The party, headed by Winston Field, the same Rhodesian, who in 1956 surprised Rev. Abel Muzorewa with the shocking statement, "I do not believe that an African will go to

heaven.”⁵⁹ With the Rhodesia Front in power, a new tidal wave of reactionary racial politics was about to be launched in Zimbabwe.

However, politics aside, Dodge returned to Zimbabwe in time for a very festive season of Christmas. Lois and Peggy were home for Christmas. Furthermore, Edward Jr. and Cliff’s Christmas letters were received on Christmas Eve. Because Dodge had recently visited Edward’s family, as well as Cliff, he was pleased to be so up to date with everyone in the family. Joining them this Christmas was Patricia Meyer, Lois’ friend from Texas, and Rob Stuart. Lois and Patricia were both teaching at Hartzell High School at Old Mutare Methodist Center. Rob was helping William Humbane as secretary in the bishop’s office. The six of them would thoroughly enjoy spending Christmas together. Only two days after Christmas, it was time to bid farewell to Lois and Patricia, who planned to visit Europe. Lois, who was the first to teach French in Zimbabwe, was going to France to study and advance in the subject. Patricia would eventually return to Texas. With all the complicated events in 1962, the Dodges were pleased to conclude the year on a high note, especially with all of the political and social uncertainty facing the country of Zimbabwe with a new year.

Indeed, 1963 began with a plethora of political question marks in Zimbabwe. The new Rhodesia Front (RF) government of Winston Field had won the recent December general election on a single issue of race. It had become a lightning rod issue. The party staunchly promised the white voters once elected they would seek independence from Britain by any means necessary. At a time when the Africans were demanding greater independence and a majority rule themselves, the Rhodesia Front promised its white

voters “that it would never share power or government with blacks; the government belonged to the white people only, and blacks had no role in it.”⁶⁰

It appeared the country was headed for a serious confrontation. Most Africans received the Rhodesia Front government with complete dismay. In a April 29, 1963 letter, Dodge and Eunice would write about the low morale of the African community: “There are tremendous feelings of frustration among Africans. There is a general pessimism among them as to the immediate future.”⁶¹

Moreover, Dodge showed his personal dismay in a January 10 essay entitled “That Mythical Creature, The Moderate African.” He observes:

It is not that there is no such thing as a moderate African -- but that the European cannot recognize one when he sees him. The European looks at African leaders who are in fact reasonable and patient and truly moderate and considers them dangerous. In doing so he drives the tides of African nationalism onto the rocks of extremism and violence. He believes that a man like Joshua Nkomo of Southern Rhodesia and Kenneth Kaunda of Northern Rhodesia are dangerous and extremists. He deludes himself into thinking that if he can restrict and discredit these men, really moderate ones will supplant... The moderate African is recognizable today; he will not be so tomorrow if African nationalism is not dealt with sympathetically and positively now. The expectation of the “moderate African” is a myth because he is always expected tomorrow, but never recognized today.”⁶²

Furthermore, Dodge aimed to articulate the emphasis of freedom for Africans. He writes, “Rhodesia European, with the standard of living second to none in the world cannot seem to grasp the fact that his prized trimmings of civilization are not the only thing the African wants. He wants freedom. He may not know what that involves; he may make a mess of things for a while when he finds himself in control; but he intends to have it.”⁶³

Dodge believed his higher education program for the Africans could not only better train men and women for leadership in the church, but also leaders for a new, independent nation. Because experience was an important part of leadership, Dodge hoped that by successfully promoting Africans to district superintendents and as leaders of institutions such as schools, mission centers, hospitals and church farms, they were also capable of leading national institutions. Thus, Africans serving in leadership in the church were being groomed in preparation for leadership in the nation. Dodge was also realistic in understanding leadership as a process. He had seen the chaos which followed Congo's independence in 1960 prompting him to ask, "Look at the mess in the Congo! Where were the trained Congolese when independence arrived so unexpectedly?"⁶⁴

Therefore, the bishop was attentive and intentional to place Africans in positions of leadership in Zimbabwe. He appointed Matthew Wakatama as principal of the only Methodist Teacher's Training College, the first black principal of any college in Zimbabwe. However, Dodge's tactics were not easily received. The Department of Education resisted approving the appointment of Wakatama because it was a "departure from custom to have a black head any institution which had whites in inferior positions."⁶⁵ However, he had taught in Zimbabwe before studying in the United Kingdom, under the Crusade Scholarship, and graduated with master's degree in education. It was Dodge's opinion that upon Wakatama's return to Zimbabwe, he was easily the most qualified person to be the principal of the college.

Many other students who studied in Europe and returned home were placed in positions of leadership in Methodist mission centers and schools as teachers and administrators. At Old Mutare, Dodge appointed Mr. Tsopotsa as the first black

headmaster at Hartzell High School, Furthermore, he appointed Rev. Abel T. Muzorewa to be the pastor in charge at Old Mutare, replacing Rev. Larry Eisenberg, a white missionary. Old Mutare Methodist center, the biggest mission of the Methodist Church in Rhodesia, would become administratively led by Africans themselves.

However, the changes initiated by Dodge would continue to be met with anxiety and fear. Missionaries feared their jobs would be taken by the returning educated Africans. It is from the backdrop of these changes that Eunice in a letter she wrote on the first day of the annual conference at Mutambara on April 29, 1963 writes, “Missionary morale is low. My husband has been trying to push African leadership and many missionaries have got the idea that they will be soon be un-needed. They cannot seem to grasp the bishop’s plan of turning over present jobs to Africans so that missionaries can be freed to do other jobs for which there was no opportunity formerly.”⁶⁶ Dodge moved to clarify his initiatives as well as soothe missionary anxiety. He writes, “One thing is certain, we have no indication that the church in Africa thinks it can get along without missionaries. On the contrary, perhaps missionaries should broaden their fields of knowledge and creativity for service in Africa.”⁶⁷

On March 13, 1963, the African Ministers’ Fraternal organized a Day of Prayer for Peace and Unity. The group had become collectively unhappy with the government of Winston Field. Over 18,000 people gathered in a soccer field in Highfields, Harare. It was the first time a large religious gathering had been organized by Africans in Zimbabwe. The success of the event would lead to the formation of the Christian Council of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe Christian Council) affiliated with the World Council of Churches. While the Christian Council had been created out of the African Ministers’

Fraternal, they elected Bishop Dodge as the group's first president. The election revealed the significant amount of respect African Christians across denominations in the country had for Bishop Dodge.

However, the fast changing political environment and the pressures of supervising the work of the church in three countries took its toll on Dodge's health. For one thing, he was tired. As a result, Eunice urged her husband to take a vacation. Thus, in preparation for the 1963 Annual Conference, Dodge and Eunice would take a month long vacation to Nyanga. It was a familiar location. They had repeatedly vacationed there since 1948 ever since their furloughs as missionaries in Angola. In search of some peace and tranquility, the couple rented a cottage in the mountains of Nyanga. Eunice writes, "we had the most serene and restful holiday we have had in 29 years. It gave Ralph good preparation for the conference, I hope."⁶⁸

Bishop Dodge's call for a New Church in a New Africa

Following the vacation in Nyanga, Dodge and Eunice traveled to Mutambara Methodist Center for Annual Conference. At the Annual Conference, in his episcopal address, Dodge addressed his frustration with the Rhodesia Front government that he described as "avowedly white supremacist". Furthermore, he called upon the church to "start a revolution."⁶⁹ He challenged Methodists to collectively engage in non-violent means to bring about change in Zimbabwe. He writes:

But revolution does not have to be violent; it is generally quiet and peaceful. The revolution which the Church starts is of the non-violent kind; but it is no less a revolution. Revolution means a total and drastic change in ideas and institutions; it means transformation of people and their social environment... There is a great need for change in Southern Rhodesia, so that all people will feel that they have a vital part in the affairs of the nation.⁷⁰

For Dodge, it was a significant moment in his ministry as bishop. Nonetheless, he was fully aware of the repercussions and consequences he would face in regards to the colonial government. His call for a revolution was followed by three political resolutions which were adopted by the conference. Given that the new government had declared its intention to seek independence legally or illegally from Britain, it was resolved at the annual conference that the Methodist Church “is opposed to any unilateral declaration of independence by the present Southern Rhodesia Government. The church supports the principle of every man’s right to vote.”⁷¹

The second resolution called on the government to lift its ban on ZAPU stating, “We urge the Southern Rhodesia Government to lift the ban on Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) so that African nationalism may have a means of expressing itself.”⁷² Finally, the annual conference tasked the committee of Christian Social Concerns to write a letter of “encouragement and commendation to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. prominent Negro civil right leader in the United States who was recently imprisoned along with 200 other Negroes in Birmingham, Alabama after protesting colour bar laws in non-violent mass demonstration.”⁷³

While Bishop Dodge was clearly frustrated with the political situation in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, he would not waver as a proponent of evangelism. From the beginning of his career as a missionary in Angola, Dodge had exhibited an enthusiasm for evangelism. At best he was a church planter, but he always found himself being placed in administrative positions where sometimes his passion for evangelism was not utilized. Nevertheless, at the evangelism rallies in the churches, it is said that people would continually and overwhelmingly respond to his evangelistic preaching that called people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. According to Kurewa, Bishop Dodge's evangelistic preaching was unique in that "it gave dignity to each person, irrespective of his background, it raised up the dejected, despised, and downhearted. He preached hope and we were always 'disappointed' whenever he finished preaching because we always wanted to hear more."⁷⁴

Likewise, in his episcopal address at Mutambara, Bishop Dodge called the Methodists to rekindle their enthusiasm for evangelism. He rallied the church by saying:

Evangelism is more a mood, a spirit, an attitude, a sharing than a question of methods... The most effective kind of evangelism ever thought up is personal witnessing to the grace of God in the human heart. It is when you tell me what God has done for you that I am convinced. It is when I pass along the news of what God has done for me to my neighbor that both he and I are blessed. The church needs to bestir itself now; for the times are favorable.

We must never forget that the Great Commission is for all time and for all people. God with all His power, is still dependent upon human personalities to do His work and make His proclamations... All along the Gospel has been preached by Europeans to Africans; now let the Africans take the initiative and boldly proclaim the Gospel to Europeans, to Asians, and to people of Mars – should they also come to Africa.⁷⁵

Following Annual Conference, on June 28, 1963 Ralph and Eunice would celebrate their 29th wedding anniversary in which Eunice would write to her friends, “Ralph and I are growing old.” However, the 29 years also marked their mutual support of one another in the mission field.

The best gift they would receive celebrating the event was a letter from Fleming H. Revell, a publishing house in New Jersey, who requested that Dodge send them a manuscript on the church in Africa. Since Eunice was already the editor of the *Africa Christian Advocate*, in which Dodge had written several articles about the church in Africa, Eunice would encourage him in the endeavor to use his articles as a framework for the manuscript. However, Dodge would need some time away from the busy atmosphere of Harare in order to focus on writing the book. They reserved their usual vacation cottage in Nyanga for an entire month. Leaving his administrative assistant, Rev. Jonah Kawadza in charge of things, Ralph and Eunice set off to Nyanga with two typewriters, typing paper, and boxes of notes and correspondences.

In the seclusion of the Nyanga Mountains, Dodge and Eunice began to construct the thematic emphasis for the book. In the many years they had spent in Africa as missionaries, and now as bishop, the Dodges had come to the realization that Africans were revolting against all forms of western domination. Consequently, the revolt involved a critical evaluation of Christianity. Dodge believed many Africans, especially the young people who were second generation Christians, felt that Christianity was altogether too western in character. Africans associated it with materialism and narcissism. Young people had repeatedly shared with Dodge the displeasure people had with missionaries who lived in a manner that contradicted the teachings of Christ.

As a result of the critique of the church in Africa, Dodge would go on to expound upon the ways in which the church had failed most young Africans in the first chapter by entitling the section, “The Church and its Critics”. In the second section of the book, entitled “The Church and its Witness” Dodge would be more apologetic in his approach to missions, missionaries and the wonderful things that had been accomplished as a result. Lastly, in the third section of the book, Dodge would be more prophetic in laying out a vision for the church, entitling it “The Church and its Future.”

The book was a way for Dodge to relay his own understanding of the narrative of African Christianity. He saw parallels in the agony of the church in the present with those of the great pioneer missionaries who had first brought Christianity to Africa. Thus, he would go on to entitle the book, “Birth Pangs of Re-creation.” However, when the publishers accepted the manuscript for print, they decided to change the title of the book to “Missionary Go Home.” Yet, realizing the sensitivity of the missionary community, Dodge rejected the new title, believing it to be too provocative. Because the publishers wanted “Missionary” to be part of the title of the book, they would ultimately compromise by agreeing to title the book, *The Unpopular Missionary*.

With the monumental task of writing a book complete, Dodge returned to Harare and focused on the project that he was most passionate. As much as Bishop Dodge wanted to send as many students as possible overseas to colleges and universities, he also recognized the program was limited in funding. Relying solely on the generosity of the churches in the United States, Dodge believed it could only partially help satisfy “the greatest hunger known in Africa for education.” Both he and Bishop Booth had talked extensively about the need for new funding initiatives at the Africa Central Conference,

held August 20-29, 1960 at Nyadiri Methodist center. Dodge began to imagine the possibility of the church establishing what he deemed as a Protestant University for all of Africa. Writing in *The Christian Advocate*'s October-December issue of 1963, he says:

It must be recognized that in the long run, the training for leadership must be done within the countries of the people involved, or at least on the continent. Picking out, one by one, one by one, persons ready for scholarship is not adequate to provide as supply of leaders which will answer the demand. The church must do more in higher education within Africa... We have been responsible for most African education but we have not moved beyond the high school level except for a little theological education and teacher training. We must be more realistic in facing the need for higher education in medicine, in social science, and in every branch of technics needed for the building of a Christian society.⁷⁶

Dodge initiated a Methodist committee on education, chaired by Bishop Matthews, to begin consultations on the prospect of building a Methodist institution of higher education. The consultation was held December 18-20, 1963 in Kitwe, Zambia. In a letter to the missionaries of Zimbabwe on November 23, 1963, Eunice writes, "My husband is going to Kitwe on December 18-19-20 to meet with a committee chaired by Bishop Matthews to explore the possibility of establishing a Protestant University for all of Africa -- interdenominational, inter-racial and multi-lingual."⁷⁷

The seeds that were planted from the conference would eventually sprout to full fruition. Dodge's vision for the Methodist Church to establish an institution of higher education in Africa would be realized twenty-nine years later when the United Methodist Church launched Africa University, in Mutare, Zimbabwe in 1992. Moreover, Africa University remains the only United Methodist Church institution of higher learning on the continent of Africa.

By the time Lois Dodge returned to Zimbabwe from France on December 13 to continue her teaching at Old Mutare, she had been away for almost a year. Peggy, who was almost seventeen, had recently completed her high school in Zimbabwe and was ready to attend college in the United States. The four of them would spend Christmas of 1963 at their home in Mt. Pleasant, Harare. However, not long after Christmas, Ralph, Eunice and Peggy would begin to make preparations for their trip to Europe and the United States.

Before Dodge left for Europe and the United States, he organized an important consultation conference for the Methodist Church at Old Mutare Methodist center. With over a hundred and fifty people in attendance (laymen, pastors and missionaries) the conference was held January 1-5, 1964 under the theme, “A New Church in a New Africa.” The concept of a “New Church in a New Africa” was based on two areas of struggle in the Methodist Church as identified by Dodge. First, there was the struggle to become less dependent upon the American church for missionaries, money and control. Dodge aimed for the Methodist Church to become more independent and self-sustaining. This would require more self-support, hard work, and sacrifice – all of which were within the capabilities and resources of the African people; yet they were not willing to step out and stand on their own feet.

The second area of struggle identified by Dodge was in the church’s ability to be effective in Zimbabwe’s fast changing society. At the recent 1963 Annual Conference, it had been reported that there were 13,774 full members and 22,673 members on probation in the conference, with another 42,360 students enrolled in the Methodist schools. Thus, while tens of thousands of students were coming through the Methodist Church’s

education system, the church was struggling to retain them. The conference aimed to address this concerning statistic. Writing in *The Christian Advocate's* April – June issue, Dodge aimed to answer as to why this was the case:

There are many answers to this question but I will mention what I consider the chief reasons: (1) a church membership in which a majority feels the church belongs to the “mission.” (2) a pastorate that looks to the mission center for support and other benefits instead of its people. (3) a church that expends most its personnel, energies, and resources building and operating educational and medical institutions instead of undergirding and assisting the growth of an independent and eventually, an interdependent church.⁷⁸

In explanation as to why the conference was entitled “A New Church in a New Africa,” Dodge writes,

The new church includes educational, medical and agricultural work as well as evangelism. It is a change of mind which will make the African people feel the church belongs to them. It is not colonial and not paternalistic. The new church must re-evaluate its basic purpose, re-establish its goals and re-vitalize its witness. It also seeks to transfer control of all funds and properties in Rhodesia to the Annual Conference and new boards and committees responsible to it.⁷⁹

The Consultation proved to be an important event. Not only did it bring together 150 leaders in the Methodist Church to critically think and propose ways in which the Methodist Church could be better indigenized, it was able to discuss, under the leadership of a missionary from Alabama named Rev. Robert Hughes, four questions: How can the church really become indigenous? What shall be our relationship with each other (missionaries and Africans)? How can we have a responsible church? How can we live what we preach?

Bishop Dodge wanted the missionaries and the Africans to freely discuss issues of the church without fear of repercussion. On the issue of indigenization, he asked, “Is an indigenous church the same or different from an autonomous church or an independent church? Did the missionaries come to Rhodesia to establish an indigenous church? How can the church be really indigenous?”⁸⁰ As a result, the Consultation Conference ended with resolutions that demonstrated a new direction for the church, one in which Africans would play a more active role in its partnership with missionaries. The Consultation Conference resolved among other things to:

- a) Create a conference Board of Finance and Co-ordination (BOFAC) which was made up of clergy and lay people, missionaries and Africans.⁸¹

BOFAC, an active and well-represented board, immediately became responsible for communicating policy issues concerning the church in Zimbabwe with the Board of Missions in New York. One of its emphases became the subject over the transfer of deeds from the Board on Missions to the Annual Conference. With all of the houses on mission centers under the Board of Missions in New York City, Dodge allowed BOFAC to assign houses, previously used by missionaries, to the Africans who replaced them. One such example was Rev. Muzorewa, who having returned from the United States, was appointed to the Old Mutare Methodist Center to replace Rev. Eisenberg. With BOFAC having approved a policy of ‘interchangeable houses’ for missionaries and Africans in various appointments, Muzorewa moved into the house. However, the experience was not entirely a pleasant one as he writes:

I moved into an empty house because the ‘missionary’ furniture had been removed... To us the barren house symbolized the stupid straightforward segregation that still infected the church community. Impulsively, I lashed out at those who were responsible for this injustice and this led to a strained relationship with certain missionaries... The controversy did lead to policy changes, however, which improved relationships between African and missionary staff.⁸²

Other recommendations from the Consultation Conference to encourage indigenous participation included:

- b) Removing the requirement which allowed new converts to be on probation for one year before they were baptized as it was agreed that such policy discouraged new Christians. Instead they resolved that “new converts be baptized without due delay and then instructed so that they can grow in warmth and fellowship of the church.”⁸³
- c) Introducing African musical instruments in worship. “We recommend the use of such African musical instruments as *mbira*, *ngoma* (drums) and *hosho* (rattles) in our worship services. Their use has been criticized by some because they have also been used in *mashave* (ancestral worship) services. We feel that the origin of a musical instrument does not determine whether it is good or bad.”⁸⁴
- d) Strongly speaking out and oppose the passage of oppressive legislation, and government use of oppressive practices through the church’s monthly newspaper, *The Umbowo*.⁸⁵

e) Regarding arrest, imprisonment, or deportation as an honorable event if such was a result of a member having taken a stand on Christian principles further stating, “We extend our honor and support to him and must protest any such government action in strong terms.”⁸⁶

f) Calling for a repeal of the Land Apportionment Act which confined Africans in ghettos and reserves.

With the significant Consultation Conference now complete and new changes for the church on the horizon, Dodge was ready to begin the family trip to Europe and the United States. On January 16, 1964, Dodge, Eunice and Peggy traveled to Durban, South Africa to board the “Europa” to Venice. The family arrived in Venice, Italy on February 4 and would spend twenty four days in Europe visiting several countries by train. On February 28, they flew from Copenhagen to Los Angeles to visit their grandchildren. While in the United States they visited family members, passing through Kentucky to see Clifford. They concluded their visit by attending the 1964 General Conference of the Methodist in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, April 26 – May 8.

With Bishop Dodge back in the United States, there would be a significant political shift in Zimbabwe. On April 13, 1964, when influential members of the Rhodesia Front revolted against the Prime Minister, Winston Field, which led to his resignation, Ian Smith, a hardliner and minister of treasury ascended to power. Upon becoming Prime Minister, Ian Smith declared, “We have a mission here, and this is to save Rhodesia, and I think I am prepared to get on and give a lead and make decisions... I am not one of those people who equivocates, tolerate fools easily.”⁸⁷

Bishop Dodge and Eunice arrived back in Harare on May 10, 1964. The following day, they were in attendance at the Murewa Methodist Center for the 26th Session of the Rhodesia Annual Conference. Building on the significant groundwork of the January Consultation Conference, the annual conference endorsed all of its recommendations and resolutions.

Following the Annual Conference at Murewa Methodist center, Bishop Dodge published an article about law and order in *The Church and ---- Series*. The article, entitled *The Church and Law and Order*, contained a foreword from a pamphlet written by Herbert Chitepo, the first black lawyer in Zimbabwe and a leader in the newly formed Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), led by Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe. In the foreword, Chitepo writes, “It is inspiring to find a Christian leader prepared to face the basic problem of our time. If laws are unjust, and contrary to God’s image of man clearly perceived, must Christians obey them?”⁸⁸ In the article Dodge would not only openly criticize Smith’s government for legislating discriminatory laws, but would go on to write, “The time is past when the minority can hope to legislate with impunity against the majority. Existing discriminatory legislation should be quickly and carefully revised to give all citizens a feeling of dignity and appreciation in belonging to the community.”⁸⁹

Dodge’s name would become more familiar as a published author. By early June, his new book *The Unpopular Missionary* was made available in bookstores throughout Zimbabwe. The sale of the new book, in conjunction with his article on *The Church and Politics*, foreworded by Ndabaningi Sithole president of ZANU PF, raised his stature as a critic of the government. In the article, Dodge challenged Christians to participate in

politics, but stopped short of emphasizing partisan allegiance. He writes, “The church should rarely support any political party or uphold any political philosophy.”⁹⁰

Nonetheless, for Dodge, the church should strive to be an advocate in national politics, as he writes, “The church in general and Christian individuals in particular must strive to develop a society in which all people have an equal achievement, in which the basic freedoms of speech, press, and religious worship are guaranteed, in which no individual is permanently stigmatized by the accident of his birth.”⁹¹

In the following month, Dodge would publish *The Church and Freedom* in which he further expounds on the political nature of the church:

The Church accepts the position that no people can make their maximum contribution to life of any institution or society in general so long as they are dominated by other individuals... He who is dominated by another spiritually, academically or politically will never develop his full potential... The church rejects intimidation whether from established government agencies; from youthful members of apolitical parties; or from ecclesiastical authorities, all forms of intimidation should be abandoned.⁹²

In a stable political environment, articles such as these on law, order, politics, and freedom might not raise much concern among government officials. However in Zimbabwe, where the Prime Minister Ian Smith argued, “No majority rule in Rhodesia – not in a thousand years,”⁹³ Dodge had dangerously crossed a line in the eyes of the state. His writings, the education program and the statements from the church published in the only African newspaper, *The Daily News*, along with the Methodist Church’s monthly

newspaper, *Umbowo*, were beginning to be viewed as subversive and threats to national security.

Bishop Dodge's deportation and the Methodist Church's response

On July 16, two immigration officers arrived early in the morning at the Methodist Church offices in Harare armed with deportation papers for Bishop Dodge and Rev. Robert Hughes. The deportation orders gave them two weeks only to finish their work and leave Zimbabwe. Stunned by the order, Dodge writes:

I just sat there motionless and stared at the document in front of me. "What have I done to be deported from Southern Rhodesia? What if I don't sign?" I asked a bit belligerently.

"The law will take its course. Probably it would be imprisonment," the officer replied. That was it. It seemed final. Taking my pen in a moist hand, I signed the document with irregular strokes.⁹⁴

When Bishop Dodge noticed that the deportation orders also included his wife, he inquired as to why Eunice was included. One of the officers replied, "Your wife may return whenever she wishes, the only condition being that she first secures a divorce from you!"⁹⁵

When the immigration officers left, Dodge gathered his staff at the Methodist Church head offices and informed them of the situation. Everyone was shocked by what they heard. With tears in their eyes, the staff joined hands and prayed together. William Humbane remembers, "We all thought it was a mistake. It was like we were dreaming."⁹⁶

Dodge would take an early lunch break that day in order to go home and tell Eunice about the unexpected turn of events. As they sat at the table to have chicken soup

for lunch, they held hands to bless the meal, but on that day, and full of so many emotions, Ralph squeezed Eunice's unusually tight. His voice cracked as he struggled to offer a blessing for the meal. He writes:

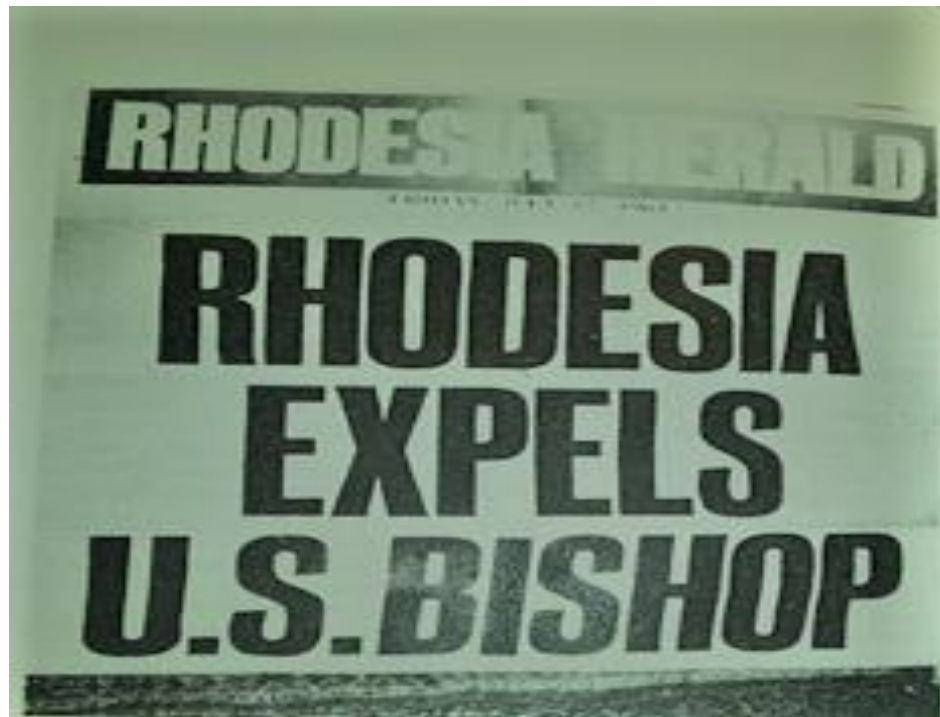
Time and briny tears cooled the soup as I related the happenings of the morning. She sobbed. "What will our family and friends back home think? In America only the very worst criminals are deported. How will this affect the children?" We left the cold soup on the table and sat on a couch holding hands while racking our brains for the mistakes that we – that I – had made that might have led to this drastic action by the government. I didn't feel like a criminal. Very low in spirit, we asked each other, "Why has God let this happen to us? Had he not called us to the mission field? Had we not been faithful in proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed?"⁹⁷

With no easy and immediate answers to their lamenting questions, Dodge changed out of his office clothes into work clothes to go to the place he had gone time and time again in order to ponder the events and stresses of life, his garden. By that evening, he would continue with his normal schedule, a radio interview to discuss *The Unpopular Missionary*.

At Old Mutare Methodist center, people learned of Bishop Dodge's deportation when it was announced during the 8 o'clock evening news. Lois who was teaching at Hartzell Secondary School at Old Mutare and her soon-to-be husband were in the Griffins' living room after dinner waiting for the evening news. It was something of a ritual in those days for everyone at the mission center to listen to the news after dinner. When it was announced that Bishop Dodge and the Rev. Robert Hughes had been deported, Lois says, "It came as an enormous shock, like a physical blow. I was

extremely grateful to be among friends who offered wonderful support, although they were all shaken by the news, too.”⁹⁸

By the next day, Friday, July 17, Dodge gathered the strength to go to work. As he drove to work, on the newsstands of Harare was *The Herald* headline, in big, bold letters: RHODESIA EXPELS U.S. BISHOP.



The Rhodesia Herald of July 17, 1964 newsstand headline announcing Bishop Dodge's deportation

By the time Dodge arrived at his offices, reporters were waiting to interview him. When they inquired as to why the bishop was being deported, Dodge responded, “I feel that I am being judged without knowing the cause or being able to make a reply.”⁹⁹ Asked whether he had participated in politics during his stay in Zimbabwe, Dodge answered, “Only so far as religion overlaps politics.”¹⁰⁰

As news of the deportation quickly traveled throughout the country, many were surprised. Both Dodge and Hughes received an outpouring of support from churches, civic organizations and individuals. Responding to the deportation, the editor of *The Daily News*, a daily newspaper which was widely read by Africans writes:

Bishop Dodge's sin has been his broadmindedness and seeing the need for training in Christian leadership. He was leading Africans to green pastures where they are not supposed to graze. Throwing out of the country people like Bishop Dodge means the government and the people who support it have rejected the gospel of reconciliation... I believe that if history repeats itself Bishop Dodge will return to Zimbabwe as an honored guest and those that have expelled him from the country will find themselves occupying positions of lesser importance at the dawn of a new nation of Zimbabwe.¹⁰¹

Writing from prison at Gonakudzingwa, Joshua Nkomo, president of ZAPU encouraged Bishop Dodge saying, "Your field of service has included the 'social gospel.' One needs only to see the excellent and rewarding work being done under your leadership... In this country the type of your Christian mission is a novelty. I believe that you are facing a temporary setback because you are an unusual leader. I wish you a well-earned furlough."¹⁰²

Some people believed Dodge was simply a pawn in that his deportation was a protest by the Rhodesian government to American diplomatic policies. In a letter to the editor in the *Rhodesia Herald*, a woman named Mrs. Dorothy Stebbing staunchly opposed Dodge's deportation saying, "In my opinion the government's action in deporting Bishop Dodge is the act of a coward and a bully... Why haven't they deported the other leaders who have taken a similar public stand? Obviously because they

wouldn't dare! However, they are quite safe in picking on the American Methodist, merely because American government policies are unpopular in this country.”¹⁰³

Furthermore, Lovemore Mutambanengwe, a student studying in Netherlands, sent a letter to Bishop Dodge expressing his support: “All who have had the occasion to understand the work you have been doing cannot but condemn the decision of the Southern Rhodesia government to deport you from the country as irresponsible and a sheer manifestation of political vindictiveness.”¹⁰⁴

Support for Dodge was evident across denominational lines as well. Writing on behalf of the Salisbury African Ministers' Fraternal, Rev. M. Nyandoro thanked Bishop Dodge for his work: “There is an African saying which says, ‘A cow which gives much milk does not last long.’ How true this is in your case. We consider you a soldier who has triumphed and who is still marching onward to greater glory. Yours is a holiday for which you should feel a sense of comfort and satisfaction, realizing that our prayers are with you.”¹⁰⁵

However, not everyone would protest the deportation order. One particular missionary from America wrote a letter to *The Rhodesia Herald* in support of the order. Mr. H.L Ferguson writes: “Please permit one American to register hearty approval of the government's deportation order against the discourteous and flagrantly meddlesome Bishop and colleague.”¹⁰⁶ There were some missionaries even in The Methodist Church who were of the opinion that Bishop Dodge had become too political in his dealing with the Rhodesian government. They felt that he was meddling in political matters and Mr. H. L. Ferguson's shared such sentiments.

Unfortunately for Dodge, the deportation order conflicted with the preparation of marriage for their daughter, Lois. She and her fiancé, John McIntyre Stewart of Britain, planned to marry at the Old Mutare Methodist Center on August 15, 1964. When Dodge wrote a letter to the Minister of Internal Affairs informing him of the conflict concerning his daughter's marriage, the minister was lenient in issuing the bishop a temporary permit to visit Zimbabwe on August 14, 15 and 16 "for the sole purpose attending your daughter's wedding."¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, Eunice was allowed to remain in Zimbabwe until August 16.

Some of Dodge's supporters would try to intervene in the situation. The Methodist Church leadership in Zimbabwe, surprised by the deportation orders of their bishop and Rev. Hughes, sought to change the directive. On the day of the announcement, Rev. Jonah Kawadza had left the Methodist offices to see how the church might be able to help reverse the government's decision. He called to request a meeting with Rev. Kare Ericksson of Epworth Theological College. By the time Rev. Erickson arrived, more than one hundred people had gathered at the Methodist offices in Harare in hopes of being able to help the situation.

At the meeting, it was decided that a committee of 10 people would work to seek legal counsel on how the church would appeal the deportation orders. The "Committee of Ten", as they became known, was comprised of Rev. Jonah Kawadza (chairman), Rev. Kare Ericksson, Rev. Abel Muzorewa, Mr. Musamba (conference lay leader), Mr. W. Finster (a missionary), Dr. Mutasa and the four District Superintendents (Rev. Blomquist, Rev. Curtis, Rev. Chikosi and Rev. Nyamukapa).

The committee met with Bishop Dodge on Friday, July 17 at the church headquarters. They drafted a letter to Mr. Harper, the Minister of Internal Affairs to request a meeting to discuss the directive. Rev. Kawadza would personally deliver the letter to the minister's office. Three days later, the minister responded to the request by asking for more details concerning the meeting. That same day, the committee quickly drafted a reply stating that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the deportation orders.

While the committee would seek to challenge the order through official channels, others sought refuge through their faith. On Saturday, July 18, pastors in the Salisbury Ministers' Fraternal organized an ecumenical prayer meeting at Trinity Church in Harare. Both Dodge and Rev. Hughes attended the meeting. Dodge would share with the group his thoughts and how he was processing the sudden change of events. He shared how his initial reaction at being declared a prohibited immigrant was one of shock, because in America, "only the most notorious criminals are deported and that after a fair and public hearing."¹⁰⁸

Secondly, he told them that his reaction was one of relief: "Now I knew exactly where I stood with the party in power. Gone was the nagging fear lest I say or write something which could be construed as seditious. Now I could follow my conscience and freely speak the Christian truth, as I see it. In this sense I am free."¹⁰⁹

Following the prayer meeting, fifty-eight African pastors of the Salisbury African Ministers' Fraternal would organize a protest march outside Prime Minister Ian Smith's

weekly cabinet meeting on Tuesday, July 21. Moreover, they presented a petition to the Prime Minister's office stating:

We regard this act as directed not only against two individuals of a particular denomination but against each one of us. We believe, furthermore, that the act will create a wide gulf between the Government and World Christian opinion. We therefore call upon the government, with all the urgency at our command, to rescind this decision. If this is not done we urge that the reasons for the decision be made known at once to the individuals concerned and the right of appeal granted to them.¹¹⁰

On July 23, Rev. Kawadza received the following reply from Mr. Harper's office, "That there would be no useful purpose in having a discussion and that, under the Act under which the order was issued, no reason need be given."¹¹¹ However, in his book *The Bible, the Bullet and the Ballot*, Fabulous Moyo posits that the Rhodesian government had long considered deporting Bishop Dodge in 1963 after the Annual Conference at Mutambara center where he had called for a non-violent revolution but Winston Field then prime minister "stopped the deportation because of fear of the political damage that action would have caused."¹¹² It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Bishop Dodge had been under the Rhodesian surveillance even before Ian Smith had become the prime minister.

Realizing there was little they could do in terms of a legal challenge the Committee of Ten decided that with only eight days left before Dodge was scheduled to leave the country, he better travel to each district to meet with the people and bid his farewell. As a result, Friday, July 31, was to be observed as a day of mourning throughout the conference. On that day, all Methodist schools were to be closed. With it

being the day the bishop and Rev. Hughes were supposed to leave the country, a prayer meeting was scheduled at the Harare Methodist Church (St. Paul's UMC now).

On Saturday, July 25th, Bishop Dodge was at Old Mutare Methodist Center. Mutasa Makoni district had organized an all-night prayer vigil to pray for Bishop Dodge and to offer a farewell for him. Early in the evening, Dodge and Eunice arrived at Old Mutare with William Humbane driving the car. They were met at the entrance of mission center with over 600 singing and dancing students. When the students asked William Humbane to turn off the ignition and shift the gears into neutral, they took turns pushing car for the last quarter mile to the center. Mary Higgs, a missionary at Old Mutare who watched the students welcome them writes:

My typewriter refuses to express adequately what is going on here at Old Umtali. The young men and women of Old Umtali are at this moment in a slow, dramatic walk to Beit Hall, moving beside the car that bears Bishop and Mrs. Dodge. They are chanting in deafening but beautiful chorus walking very slowly. The expression is deeply expressive and moving. Their Bishop is being deported. They cannot understand.¹¹³

With the Beit Hall filled to capacity, and students and people from all over the district, Mary Higgs writes, "Then in the Beit Hall, the Bishop spoke to the hushed, respectful throng. Their calm and sorrowful demeanor continued through the supper hour when they remained outdoors, singing and chanting, perfectly under control."¹¹⁴ After addressing the students, Dodge met with the missionaries at Old Mutare for supper. When supper was over, people congregated in the Ehnes Memorial Church for a prayer vigil. Representative leaders of all sections of the community and district spoke on behalf of the people. The Nyakatsapa *Vabvuwi* sang. Mary Higgs says, "Particularly fitting was

the Shona version of Blest Be The Tie That Binds” [*Ukama HweuKristu, 289 muNgoma*] by the women of *Rukwadzano RweWadzimai* (women’s fellowship).

As Dodge and Eunice prepared to depart late that evening, after midnight, the students and the community stood in a long line for the Bishop to bid them farewell. Once in the car, the students were ready to push the car out of the mission center while continuing to sing and dance. Mary Higgs concludes, “It is the ardent hope and prayer of the Christians of Rhodesia that Bishop Dodge will somehow be enabled to return, and that the sheep will again have their shepherd.”¹¹⁵

With only a few days remaining in Zimbabwe, Dodge’s schedule would continue to be packed with a schedule of events. On Sunday, July 26, he and Eunice were received at Hilltop Methodist Center in Sakubva, Mutare by more than 4,000 people who gathered for an outdoor service (It is at Hilltop Church that the author heard stories about Bishop Dodge when he was a pastor at Hilltop from 1999-2007). At Hilltop, a love offering was taken for Dodge in which he subsequently announced that the money would be placed in a scholarship fund. As a result of Hilltop’s generosity, the Bishop Ralph E. Dodge Scholarship Fund was launched.

At the event, a letter from Pastor Chiwota of Mutsago Methodist Church, a rural church in Marange area, was read. The reading of the letter was a significant event as it demonstrated the broad support the people of the rural communities had for the bishop:

I am so thankful that the deportation has only taken place to what I term Dodge flesh but Dodge Spirit cannot be deported anywhere. It is this Dodge spirit I wish to express my deep appreciation and without hesitation. I congratulate the Dodge spirit for the fine, wonderful, well planned and speed up educational, medical, and African leadership in

church work and the church's extension program rendered here in Zimbabwe.¹¹⁶

Included with the letter was a gift of an axe and spear from the Marange Chief, signifying in the Shona culture, the heir of a chieftainship. The importance of such being that the bishop had been like a chief to them in his leadership. Addressing the crowd at Hilltop, Bishop Dodge said, "Southern Rhodesia will not develop fully unless its inhabitants work and reason together. Imprisonment and banishment of people will not solve anything if people can't then meet and talk together. We should reason not only with those who think as we do, but those with different views from ours."¹¹⁷

From Hilltop, Dodge and Eunice travelled to Mutambara Methodist Center where Dodge would address a gathering that Sunday evening. Then, they traveled on to Rusape the place where he had first lived after arriving in Zimbabwe. At Rusape, Dodge addressed a large gathering July 27. Furthermore, he was presented with a basket as gift, symbolizing the basket in Acts 9:25 which the Apostle Paul was let down from the wall, to continue with ministry. On Monday evening, he would address yet another crowd at Nyadiri Methodist center where they spent the night. On Tuesday afternoon and evening, Bishop Dodge would address crowds at Nyamuzuwe and Murewa Methodist centers respectively. They would spend that evening in their home in Mt. Pleasant. The next day, Dodge would speak to a crowd of more than 2 000 people at Epworth Theological College. At Epworth he was given gift of a bow and an arrow, symbols of bravery and victory, in the Shona culture.

On Thursday, July 30th, Dodge would take a break from addressing crowds to spend the day with his Eunice, Lois and future son-in law. The quiet time at home with his family was a special opportunity to process the upcoming transition. Lois remembers,

Once the initial shock was absorbed, we got on with life, being very practical about facing the decisions that needed to be made. Everyone needed us to be calm and organized--and we were. We thanked God for all of our blessings; we did a lot of hugging and holding hands; we made plans.¹¹⁸

On that same day, one of Dodge's District Superintendents, Rev. Thomas L. Curtis would write a powerful letter of support to Dr. Eugene Smith at the Board on Missions expressing his appreciation for Dodge:

For a long time I have thought of writing to the Board expressing my deep appreciation for Bishop Ralph Dodge. Now that this incredible action has been taken against him by the government of this country, I feel compelled to state my feelings to our church officials... Words seem cheap at such a time as this. However, as I reflect back there are several things which stand out to me about the bishop: his tireless efforts to preach the full gospel with all its social implications; the desire to be completely fair in handling personnel and the complete giving of himself to all who came in need without partiality.¹¹⁹

As was planned by the Committee of Ten, by midday Harare Methodist Church was filled with people on Friday, July 31. The worship was characterized by jubilant singing. The drums and rattles (*ngoma nehosho*) that the Bishop had advocated for use in worship were now used in the farewell worship service.

Dodge preached from Luke 13:31-35, entitling his message "O Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe!" By using such a title, he was openly protesting the colonial government's insistence on using the term "Rhodesia." In the sermon, Dodge laments;

O Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe! How I would like to have continued to serve you! I would like to have helped you establish a nation based on Christian principles of honesty, integrity, and fair play -- with people of all races bound together by love and worthy mutual interests; but it was not to be...

Zimbabwe, O Zimbabwe! Look to your values! Beware lest you defeat yourself by teaching hate rather than love, by destroying rather than saving lives, by encouraging ignorance and prejudice rather than knowledge....

O Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe! I would cry out against your closed schools and empty schools because you will need boys and girls of today in the building of tomorrow's nation. I plead with those who are restraining you: Let the boys and girls go to school!...

Zimbabwe, O Zimbabwe! Let the cry of your agony be directed to God. Salvation comes from on high... We leave you sorrowfully, yet hopefully -- knowing that if it is God's will, we shall meet again.¹²⁰

Most attending the worship service would shed tears as Bishop Dodge preached. William Humbane says, "The effect was completely overpowering. Men and women all over the sanctuary made no effort to hide their tears."¹²¹

With the service now complete, Dodge and Rev. Hughes and their families were escorted from Harare by a large following in cars, lorries and buses to the airport for a 3:30 afternoon departure to Zambia. At the airport, the Methodists had placards denouncing the deportation of their Bishop and missionary. The crowd began to sing the Shona version of "Blest be the tie that binds." As Dodge emotionally bid farewell to the throngs of people who had gathered at the airport, he was gratified that Eunice was able to stay until after Lois' wedding.

Among the crowd at the airport were Lois and her fiancé, John Stewart. Lois, John and many others from Mutare went to Harare for the farewell service and then on to

the airport to say goodbye to Bishop Dodge and to Rev. Hughes. Lois says, “A large group of *Rukwadzano* (women’s organization) at the airport was especially vocal in sharing their displeasure about the deportation.”¹²²

After her father left, Lois and John spent some time with Mrs. Dodge, who stayed in Harare to pack and organize affairs. John stayed longer in Harare to help Mrs. Dodge, as Lois had to go back to Old Mutare since classes were still in session.

The flight time to Lusaka, Zambia took less than an hour. Arrangements had been made to take him to Ndola where he rented a hotel room for two weeks. Meanwhile, Rev. Hughes and family were to be hosted at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation by their family friend. Following the two week stay, on August 14, Dodge flew back to Zimbabwe for the wedding of his daughter at Old Mutare. He was picked up at the airport by his longtime assistant, William Humbane, and the two drove to Old Mutare. In order not to overshadow the excitement of Lois’ wedding day, he had written a letter to the students at Old Mutare saying: “I hope to see many of you on the 15th: but please, no demonstrations of affection for Mrs. Dodge and me on that day. The 16th is the BIG DAY for Miss Dodge and Mr. Stewart and they will be the focus of attention.”¹²³

The students heeded their beloved bishop’s request as there were no demonstrations that day. Later that day, Dodge proudly walked his daughter down the aisle and Rev. Muzorewa presided over the ceremony. In spite of the stress and disappointments (for instance, Lois’s brother, Clifford was supposed to be John’s best man, but the US Army took too long to process his discharge so he missed the wedding

completely), Lois and John's wedding was a happy day, full of love and support from everyone.

Following the wedding, Dodge and Eunice drove back to Harare in order to load up their Vauxhall and prepare for the journey to Zambia. At the Zambian border they were issued a temporary residence permit, and spent a night in Lusaka.

Bishop Dodge in exile

The next morning, the family drove to Ndola where they checked in at the Rutland Hotel, the place where Dodge had recently spent his two weeks. It was there that they began to discuss their future. With the Africa Central Conference only two weeks away and Dodge's eight year term as bishop preparing to come to an end, like so many times before, the Dodges would need to prepare for a new chapter in their lives. God had opened so many doors and opportunities for the Dodges over the years. And while events had not always gone as planned for the missionary family, they had become familiar with the unexpected twist and turns of life. Given that Dodge was not allowed back in Zimbabwe again, he began to wonder whether he would be re-elected as a bishop for another and final eight year turn. However, if he were to be re-elected, he wondered where he might be assigned. Because he was not allowed to visit Angola or Mozambique, his options would be limited. Practically, the only place he could be assigned was the Congo, but then there was the language barrier of not speaking French. The stress of worrying over the present predicament and their future led to sharp pains in Dodge's shoulders. He writes of a testy exchange he had with Eunice over the pain:

Here, honey, try some of this aspirin. It can't do you any harm," Eunice coaxed, rubbing my right shoulder. "No! Don't touch me! I don't want any of it. I replied with stubborn determination. "That's what aspirin is for, to relieve minor pains," she said. "My pains are not minor. They will go away in time. It's this uncertainty that gets me down!" I retorted, turning away. "Some people call it lack of faith," she reminded me.¹²⁴

While his gardens in Angola and Zimbabwe had served as remedies and outlets to stresses of the episcopacy, there was no garden to escape to at the Rutland Hotel. In such moments, it would be Eunice's counsel and presence that made the difference for Dodge.

A few days before the Africa Central Conference at Mulungwishi in the Congo, the eighteen Zimbabwe delegates to the Central Conference headed by Rev. Kare Ericksson arrived at the Rutland Hotel on a chartered bus. It was a relief for the Dodges to see familiar faces. The delegates spent a night at the hotel and the following day headed for the Congo to Mulungwishi.

The Africa Central Conference was held from August 27 – September 4, 1964. The event would involve major changes to the episcopacy and the supervision of churches in the Methodist Church in Angola, Congo, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Because Bishop Dodge could no longer travel to Angola and Mozambique, and as a result of Bishop Newell S. Booth returning to the United States, the Central Conference ultimately elected four bishops, one for each country. On the very first ballot, Dodge would be re-elected. Rev. Harry Andreasson, Dodge's administrative assistant in Angola, was elected on the third ballot in absentia. Rev. Escrivao Zunguze, Dodge's administrative assistant in Mozambique, was elected on the ninth ballot, also in absentia.

The final election was that of Rev. John Wesley Shungu from Congo, on the twelfth ballot. A remarkable milestone in African Methodism was achieved that day with the election of the first and second African bishops.

Following the election of the bishops, they were assigned to their respective areas. Bishop Andreasson was assigned to Angola, Bishop Zunguze to Mozambique, and Bishop Shungu, to Congo. Finally, Bishop Dodge was reassigned to Zimbabwe. It was a significant moment. It was the feeling of the conference that following the breakup of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1963, followed by Malawi's independence on July 6, 1964 and Zambia's independence pending, that Zimbabwe would soon follow. Meaning, it was the consensus of the conference that Dodge would indeed be able to return to Zimbabwe in due time. Following the conference, Dodge and the delegates from Zimbabwe would head back to Zambia to the Rutland Hotel in Ndola. As the delegation left them at the hotel, Bishop Dodge writes with a newly found confidence:

We were on our own with no home, no staff, a greatly reduced salary, and with only a temporary permit to stay in Northern Rhodesia... Yet we were not alone. We believed that the Holy Spirit had guided in the elections and that there was still work for us to do in Africa. Then, too, the friendship and warmth of the delegates at the conference had restored our confidence.¹²⁵

The Dodges were not able to afford staying at the hotel after the Zimbabwe delegation had left. However, a missionary at the Mindolo Ecumenical foundation, where the Hughes were staying, came to the hotel to offer them a place to stay in exchange for Eunice to do some part-time secretarial work at the center. The Dodges loaded their belongings, paid the hotel bill, and drove to Mindolo. As it turns out, Mindolo would be

their home for the next six years as Dodge would supervise the work of Methodist Church from his home at Mindolo. He came to rely heavily on his assistant, Rev. Jonah Kawadza, in Harare. Before the Zimbabwe delegation had departed the Rutland Hotel, Dodge would pull Rev. Kawadza aside said to him, “Jonah, the burden of making routine decisions is yours. As soon as we get settled, we will let you know our telephone number and address so you can contact us immediately. Of course the staff will remain with you in the head office.”¹²⁶

While things were beginning to fall into place for the Dodges, it is interesting to note that the majority of the vocally strong support the Dodges received during their struggle with the Rhodesian government came from within the country. Whether it was the students at Old Mutare who spent the night singing and dancing to support their bishop, or the courageous African pastors in Harare who marched in the street at the Prime Minister’s office to show solidarity with their leader, the support Bishop Dodge received meant a great deal to him and his family. At the same time, the voices of support one would expect to count on in times of need, the institutional support such as the Board of Missions and the Council of Bishops was nowhere to be found. Their silence on the issue would have a profound effect on the bishop. He writes: “Out of sight, out of concern became so indelibly impressed on my consciousness that for years it left its mark, and influenced my association with members of these two church units. The local support was beautiful, the outside denominational support was nil.”¹²⁷

Strengthened and undeterred, Bishop Dodge continued on his work for the church and the institution as a Methodist bishop. At Mindolo, he found himself having much more time on his hands. He was now a bishop in exile. It was an office and position with

its own challenges and obstacles. Most of the time, he would only be able to attend to or address the larger issues that were brought before him from his cabinet in Zimbabwe, by phone or sometimes in person near the Zambia – Zimbabwe border. Nonetheless, the cabinet would typically travel to Zambia for cabinet meetings every eight weeks. However, most of the decisions were made over the phone with his administrative assistant. An area that interested Dodge where he continued to make an impact was concerning the issue of the returning students who had graduated from colleges overseas. By that time, most of the first group of students who left in 1960 had completed their studies and were ready to return home.

Still, with extra time on the side, Dodge accepted a part-time teaching position at the United Church of Zambia Seminary near Mindolo. Not only did the teaching position allow him to stay occupied, but he soon was able to cultivate a small garden at Mindolo. Just like in Angola and Zimbabwe, he was soon growing vegetables in which he shared with his neighbors. Even in exile, Dodge had adapted to a schedule that could bring normalcy to his life. And while he was not able to travel to Zimbabwe, he was still able to travel to other important places that could serve to help the church there. Following a peaceful Christmas with Eunice at Mindolo, with so many projects in Zimbabwe needing financial support, Dodge set out on a fundraising trip to the United States.

Notes

¹ Lawrence W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola: A River of Many Currents* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1990), 264.

² Ibid.

³ The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was formed in December 1956 when the Angola Communist Party (PCA) and the Party of the United Struggle for Africans in Angola (PLUA) merged to form one party.

⁴ Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, 265.

⁵ February 4, 1961 is remembered as the official date on which the war of liberation for Angola started.

⁶ Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, 265.

⁷ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 27 April, 1961.

⁸ Ibid., 268.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 268.

¹¹ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 18 February, 1961.

¹² Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 143.

¹³ Ibid., 144.

¹⁴ Ibid., 145.

¹⁵ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 27 April, 1961.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1964), 42.

¹⁸ *Boletim Geral do Ultramar* 37, no. 432-38 (July – December 1961): 279, quoted in Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, 269.

¹⁹ John Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969): 330 – 33, quoted in Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, 163.

²⁰ Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, 275-276.

²¹ It is difficult to correctly tell how many of these Methodist pastors and leaders were killed in 1961 when the uprisings started. The numbers and names of the deceased available were only verified after the war but there is a general agreement that most of them were killed in 1961 and 1962.

²² Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 145.

²³ Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, 282.

²⁴ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 151.

²⁵ Sid Gilchrist, *Angola Awake*, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1968), 83.

²⁶ Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary*, 166.

²⁷ Ralph E. Dodge, "Angola and Protestant Conscience" in *The Christian Century*, November 22, 1961: 1936.

²⁸ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 18 February, 1961.

²⁹ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Church and Education*, (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, 1961), 3.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 146.

³² Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 20 May, 1961.

³³ *Official Journal of the Rhodesia Annual Conference of The Methodist Church* (May 1-7, 1961), 101.

³⁴ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, Letter to Friends, 12 March, 1962.

³⁵ *Official Journal of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Rhodesia Annual Conference of the Methodist Church* (April 29 - May 5, 1962): 57-63..

³⁶ Ibid., 59.

³⁷ Ibid., 61

³⁸ Ibid., 63.

³⁹ Dodge, *Unpopular Missionary*, 32.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 27.

⁴¹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 140.

⁴² Ibid., 141.

⁴³ Ibid.

- ⁴⁴ William Humbane, Interview by author, Mutare, May 7, 2014
- ⁴⁵ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 141.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Church and Tobacco*, (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, 1962), 5.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 6-7.
- ⁴⁹ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 25 June, 1962.
- ⁵⁰ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 127.
- ⁵¹ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 1 January, 1963.
- ⁵² Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 146.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 147.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 148.
- ⁵⁶ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 30 September, 1962.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Muzorewa, *Rise up & Walk*, 45.
- ⁶⁰ Mungazi, *The Cross Between Rhodesia and Zimbabwe*, 12.
- ⁶¹ Eunice and Ralph Dodge, Letter to Friends, 19 April, 1963.
- ⁶² Ralph E. Dodge, "That Mythical Creature, the Moderate African." (Unpublished essay, 10 January, 1963).
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Ralph Edward Dodge, "The Church in Africa: Bishop's Episcopal Address," *Official Journal of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Rhodesia Annual Conference of the Methodist Church* (April 29 - May 5, 1963): 43-56.
- ⁶⁵ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 139.
- ⁶⁶ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, 29 April, 1963.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Ralph Edward Dodge, "The Church in Africa: Bishop's Episcopal Address," *Official Journal of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Rhodesia Annual Conference of the Methodist Church* (April 29 - May 5, 1963): 43-56.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., 46.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., 83.
- ⁷² Ibid.
- ⁷³ Ibid., 84.
- ⁷⁴ John W. Z. Kurewa, Interview by author, Africa University, Mutare, May 19, 2014.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 55.
- ⁷⁶ Ralph E. Dodge, "Confidence in African Leadership?" *The African Christian Advocate*. Vol. 22, no. 4 (October – December, 1963): 15.
- ⁷⁷ Eunice E. Dodge, Letter to Missionary Family, 23 November, 1963.
- ⁷⁸ Ralph E. Dodge, "The State of the Church," *The African Christian Advocate*. Vol. 23, no. 4 (October – December, 1964).
- ⁷⁹ Everson Chikwanha, "A Reporter's View of the Consultation Conference," A New Church in a New Africa Consultation Conference (Old Mutare, 1-5 January, 1964).
- ⁸⁰ A New Church for a New Africa (Old Mutare, 1-5 January, 1964), 1.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., 3.
- ⁸² Muzorewa, *Rise Up & Walk*, 54-55.
- ⁸³ Ibid., 9.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., 10.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ⁸⁷ Mungazi, *The Cross and Zimbabwe*, 17.
- ⁸⁸ Herbert Chitepo, "Foreword" in *Church and Law and Order* (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, 1964), 3.
- ⁸⁹ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Church and Law and Order* (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, 1964), 9.
- ⁹⁰ Ralph E. Dodge, *The Church and Politics* (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, 1964), 10.

- ⁹¹ Ibid., 11.
- ⁹² Ralph E. Dodge, *The Church and Freedom* (Umtali: Rhodesia Mission Press, 1964), 9.
- ⁹³ Mungazi, *The Cross Between Rhodesia and Zimbabwe*, 58.
- ⁹⁴ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 1.
- ⁹⁵ Dodge, "On Being Declared a Prohibited Immigrant."
- ⁹⁶ William Humbane, Interview by author, Mutare, May 7, 2014.
- ⁹⁷ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 3.
- ⁹⁸ Lois Dodge-Stewart, Email to author, March 4, 2017.
- ⁹⁹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 155.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ Matthew Wakatama, "Deportation Order against Bishop Dodge is a Triumph for the Methodist Church," *The Daily News*, July 18, 1964.
- ¹⁰² Joshua Nkomo, Letter to Bishop Dodge, 18 July 1964.
- ¹⁰³ Dorothy Stebbing, Letter to the Editor, *The Rhodesia Herald*, 21 July, 1964.
- ¹⁰⁴ Lovemore Mutambanengwe, Letter to Bishop Dodge, 24 July, 1964.
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- ¹⁰⁶ H.L. Fergusson, Letter to the Editor, *The Rhodesia Herald*, 25 July, 1964.
- ¹⁰⁷ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 158.
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- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁰ Letter to Ian Smith from 58 pastors from Salisbury Area, July 20, 1964
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- ¹¹² Moyo, *The Bible, the Bullet and the Ballot*, 90.
- ¹¹³ Mary Higgs, "Deeply Moving Student Farewell to the Dodges," *Umbowo*, August 1, 1964.
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- ¹¹⁷ Philemon Nandu, "Bishop Dodge Urges Reasoning together in Sakubva Farewell," *Umbowo*, August 1, 1964.
- ¹¹⁸ Lois Dodge-Stewart, Email to author, March 4, 2017.
- ¹¹⁹ Thomas L Curtis, Letter to Dr. Eugene Smith, July 30, 1964
- ¹²⁰ Ralph E. Dodge, "O Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe," (Text of sermon, Harare Methodist Church, Harare, July 31, 1964).
- ¹²¹ William Humbane, Interview by Author, Mutare, May 5, 2014.
- ¹²² Lois Dodge – Stewart, Email to author, March 4, 2017.
- ¹²³ Ralph E. Dodge, Letter to Old Umtali Students, August 11, 1964.
- ¹²⁴ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 161.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid., 164.
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CHAPTER SIX

LEADING THE CHURCH IN EXILE (1965-1968)

Bishop Dodge in exile: The challenges

To be a bishop in exile, away from the daily routines and responsibilities of the office, would be a difficult task for Dodge. Consequently, it required finding ways to remain relevant and visible to the church in Zimbabwe since his physical presence was not an option. Buoyed by his re-election, Dodge longed for quick resolution to the volatile political situation in Zimbabwe that would grant him an opportunity to return to Zimbabwe. One of the primary ways Dodge could remain connected to the conference was through fundraising initiatives for special projects and missional opportunities. The forced exile imposed on him by the government of Rhodesia would not deter him from finding other ways to be an effective leader as the country's Methodist bishop. Thus, an opportunity to return to the United States to Boston University School of Theology to accept an award provided him an opportunity to help support the church.

In January, 1965 Dodge traveled to the United States, with Eunice remaining at Mindolo, and began fundraising for the church in Zimbabwe. It was an extensive journey and one that enabled him to travel the Midwest to his home state of Iowa. One of the highlights was returning to his home church at Terril Methodist Church where he was invited to preach. Following the privilege of speaking at the place where his call to ministry had begun, he traveled to Boston University School of Theology where he accepted a prestigious distinguished alumni award.

Next, Dodge arranged an Easter gathering in New York City for students studying in the United States. Securing funds from the Board on Missions to finance the meeting, the gathering served as a grand reunion for many of the students who were attending colleges in different states. He would also use the event as an opportunity to update the students on the various political situations of their respective countries as well as the challenges and issues that the students would possibly encounter upon returning home. During the meeting, the students offered their support and affirmed their exiled bishop, while further congratulating Dodge on his re-election to the episcopacy. Following the meeting, Dodge flew back to Zambia.

When he arrived back in Zambia in mid-April, Dodge applied for permission to enter Zimbabwe in order to attend the annual conference scheduled at Old Mutare Methodist Center May 3-9, 1965. However, as expected, the request was denied. Undeterred, in preparation for the annual conference, Dodge met with his cabinet in Zambia at Don Robin Hotel to solidify the final draft of ministerial appointments. Considering he was 700 miles away from the Methodist offices in Harare, appointment making would become a considerable challenge. Consequently, there were many decisions that his administrative assistant, Rev. Kawadza, would have to make without the necessity of consulting the bishop, especially when Dodge was away from Zambia. As a result, Dodge trusted his assistant and desired that he always make decisions that were best for the church. However, sometimes, a breakdown of communication would cause issues and challenges. In a note to Kawadza following the cabinet meeting, Dodge writes, “You threw me off balance at the Don Robin meeting. I am not quite certain if this was a group decision or a one man decision...you are leaning fairly heavily upon

missionary opinion. Never forsake the wisdom of the common man – for he is the church.”¹

Regardless of the issues, Dodge would continue to fear his administrative assistant was being too heavily influenced by some of the missionaries. As was his own style, the bishop urged his assistant to always listen to the ordinary people of the church.

In 1964, Dodge had appointed Ezekiel Makunike to be the editor of the Methodist Church’s monthly newspaper *Umbowo* (The Witness). Ezekiel had studied journalism in India and was sponsored under the Safari to Learning program. Ezekiel would go on to secure the editorship from a missionary and through *Umbowo*, Ezekiel would keep the bishop’s visibility with the church strong. He wrote a letter to Bishop Dodge saying, “Your articles continue to stimulate and inspire many readers – and they read every single bit of item by or about Dodge. You have long been accepted as a great writer. Your Bishop’s Corner is one of the most read chapters of *Umbowo* and everybody looks forward to it.”²

When the issue of contraceptives and family planning pills became a hot issue in the church, especially in the Women’s Organization, Ezekiel asked Dodge to write an article for *Umbowo* to address the controversial issue. Unfortunately, the issue had reached a point where doctors working in mission hospitals were now said to be encouraging women not to have children. As a result, some of the men, especially those who did not attend church, would subsequently forbid their wives from attending worship. Knowing that a proper response was needed, Dodge responded that it would be more effective for Ezekiel to find two equally respected women in the church who held

opposing views on the use of contraceptives to write the article. Mrs. Chikosi, a District Superintendent's wife, wrote an article against using birth pills, while Mrs. Gandanzara, a teacher and headmaster's wife at Old Mutare, wrote the concurring opinion.

Significantly, both women would acknowledge respect for their bishop in their articles for allowing them to openly discuss a volatile issue that affected so many in the church.

As more graduating students from the United States returned home from the church's higher education program, they wrote to the bishop concerning their next move. Because returning graduates were required to work for the church for two years before seeking employment elsewhere, Dodge was tasked with assigning placements for them upon their return. While there would be a few exceptions granted for students who were trained in professions where employment in the church was not possible, most students were able to fulfill the work requirement as set forth by the Board of Missions. Therefore, Dodge worked with his cabinet to ensure placements were made adequately and fairly.

Not all of the students who left for the United States would immediately return upon graduation. In the case of two students, Mushangazhike and Emouga, who were in Carbondale, Illinois, when the students wrote to Dodge inquiring about continuing their studies in graduate programs, Dodge ensured them that the "Africa Education Committee will continue to act as your legal sponsor and hold your travel while you study."³ However, he also warned them that their behavior was a departure from what the students had agreed. Nevertheless, the students obliged to the obligations of the program.

Upon return to Zimbabwe, the fruition of the higher education program was beginning to be noticed by the young people from other denominations. For example, when many in the Anglican Church began to demand that their church offer a similar program, it prompted Rev. Claude Pickens of the Executive Council of the Episcopalian Church in New York to write to Bishop Dodge on July 28, 1965:

It is not our policy to bring anyone to this country to study when he can do it in his own region... I do not quite understand why you seem to feel that universities in Africa would not be the place for your students. Our principle on this matter is that African students would have to study in Zambia or Liberia and certainly not in this country. I am interested in the fact that you seem to be drawn toward bringing Africans to this country to study.⁴

Unmoved at by the accusation that he did not value African education, Dodge would clarify his stance to Pickens on August 12:

I do not know who gave you the impression that I am interested in sending young people to the States if they can get their training in Africa. I am not. However, I am deeply interested in the youth of Africa and am doing everything possible for them to get the training necessary for this new day. If they cannot get that training in Africa as is so often the case, then I encourage them to go to Europe or USA.⁵

For the most part, however, the reaction to higher education program offered by the Methodist Church to young people in Zimbabwe was generally positive.

Yet, Dodge was disappointed that he could not be at the annual conference in person to see many of the students, and furthermore, the pastors and laity of the church. Upon learning that he was denied permission to enter Zimbabwe for the annual conference, Dodge asked Bishop Zunguze of Mozambique to preside over the event. It marked the first time Bishop Dodge was not present at annual conference. The District

Superintendents' report at the conference portrayed an atmosphere of mourning in regards to the absence of their leader. Part of the report says, "Early in the year following last Annual Conference, a great blow came to the life of our church with the deportation of our resident bishop. Though he was taken away from us without any reason given, we remember him in our prayers... We still look for the day of his return to this land."⁶

Disappointed that he could not be with his conference, Dodge would soon receive more disappointing news, and one not from the government of Zimbabwe, but from Dr. Stockton from the Board of Missions. Dodge had always felt that the Council of Bishops and Board on Missions had an attitude of "out of sight, out of concern" towards Central Conference bishops, considering they never wrote to him after his deportation. However, when a letter from the Board of Missions informed the four bishops of the Africa Central Conference that the Africa Scholarship Program could no longer sponsor undergraduates in the United States, Dodge would sternly and quickly reply on July 17, 1965:

Let me say with deep feeling, but I trust without bitterness, that part of our feeling of isolation and being considered second class bishops is due to this lack of consideration given us in matters like this by the World Division. If those who work with us so closely in some ways do not consider our opinion worth seeking in a matter of this magnitude why should others consult us on anything... I am still interested in knowing if this decision also applies to the students from other parts of the world? Do those who made this decision have any certainty that there are undergraduate schools in Africa which Methodists from Angola, Congo, Mozambique and Rhodesia can attend? I very seriously doubt!⁷

Although Bishop Dodge had expressed his disappointment with the Board of Missions after he was deported for their lack of support, the termination of the scholarship program eroded his confidence with the entity even more so, and with many of the board whom he had personally known over the years. Subsequent correspondences with some people at the Board of Missions concerning the scholarship program reveal Dodge's deteriorating relationship with the Board of Missions. For example, on November 1, 1965, Dodge wrote a lengthy letter to Mrs. Ann Porter Brown, the General Executive Secretary, showing his displeasure with the decision of the Board that "no more Methodist students from overseas can study in the States at the undergraduate level."⁸ He writes:

The Methodist Church overseas need not be bound by unilateral decisions made in New York. It is here where some of us get caught...But when the Board makes decisions which are injurious to the church on the field without consultation, what are we to do? I also like to be cooperative with the Board, but when I get only silence to my sincere inquiries, then emotional barriers are set up which makes cooperation difficult.

I appeal to you to reconsider the decision taken earlier this year. If that is impossible, then help some of us understand the real reasons for it. If perchance, the reasoning is so highly confidential or fallacious that you cannot share it, then please release us from compliance so we can set up our own programs with free conscience.⁹

Even more disheartening for Dodge was that the decision taken by the board would affect students already approved for overseas study in 1965. He would be ultimately responsible for dealing with the anxiety and confusion caused by the actions of the Board of Missions. He realized not only was his own reputation at stake, but he was not able to even travel to Zimbabwe to explain the situation to the disappointed students.

Dodge's tension with the Board of Missions reached a boiling point by November 1965. Margaret Deyo, now Executive Secretary for Angola, Mozambique, and Rhodesia, would write a stern letter to Dodge on November 24, 1965:

Actually, Ralph, if you no longer consider me as your representative in this widening gap between the field and the Board, then you are in a tough spot unless you get another one. Actually, there is no gap between the field and the Board but between you and the Board. It is a good thing that we have known each other a long time so that we dare to speak frankly.¹⁰

Dodge would reply to Deyo saying, "... your intense loyalty to the team in New York, for which I admire you, makes it increasingly difficult for us to consider you as our representative also in this widening gap between the field and the Board."¹¹

As Dodge stated in a November 1 letter to Mrs. Ann Porter Brown that he could start his own program without consulting the Board, he followed up with a letter to the president at Morningside College inquiring whether or not students might be admitted directly, and without Board of Missions approval. President Palmer agreed to the new idea and responded with a set of underlying conditions concerning any scholarships offered by the school. He writes:

First, they pay their own transportation both ways. Second, we give them free tuition by getting a church to underwrite it. Third, we will provide them opportunities for work during the school year and during the summer by which they can earn enough to pay their board and room and personal expenses. This means they cannot go to school during the summer, but must work full time in order to repay the amount which necessarily would be advanced to them the first year, etc.¹²

The new arrangement, where Dodge's students from Zimbabwe were given scholarships for tuition in return for providing their own means of living expenses would be accepted in other colleges and universities as well. As a result, the new program would soon send more African students to American colleges than the previous program offered by the Board of Missions. Furthermore, because the selected students were responsible for their own means of transportation to the United States, it allowed families to participate in the education of their sons and daughters. Some sold their cows, while others borrowed the money for the trip. As a result of such financial sacrifices, the students who were selected through this program were more disciplined than some of the ones who had gone under the Board of Missions.

By April 1966, the war of words between Dodge and the Board of Missions ended once and for all when the board overturned its decision to terminate funding for overseas undergraduate students in the United States. This time, however, the Board agreed to sponsor students recommended by the church to be trained in areas that the church determined critical for the church's ministry. The new program agreed to give priority to students who aimed to enroll in programs limited or not offered to African students in their home countries. Mrs. Griffin, the secretary for the education committee in Zimbabwe, wrote to Margaret Deyo at the Board of Missions on April 22, 1966 with gratitude for a "careful study of the actual situation in overseas countries as to the needs and possible study opportunities". However, she would also stress the committee's own "desire for flexibility in the more structured program of Crusade."¹³

UDI and Dodge's call to evacuate missionaries

While 1965 saw significant changes to Dodge's higher education program, it was also a year of significant change for the people of Zimbabwe. Prime Minister Ian Smith of Rhodesia announced a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain on November 11. When Smith announced UDI, Dodge was afraid that Zimbabweans would then revolt against the UDI in repeat of what had happened in Angola in 1961. As a result, Dodge thought there was sufficient reason to evacuate missionaries from Zimbabwe, if not for violence, but in protest. He sent the following telegraph to Margaret Deyo at the Board of Missions: "Deyo will Division approve mass withdrawal of missionaries from Rhodesia. Will Division support individuals who refuse cooperation with rebel regime? Please cable reply urgently."¹⁴

Deyo's response came on Nov. 17, 1965. It reminded Dodge of the Evacuation Policy that was put in place after the Angola situation which stated the following:

1. Danger in itself is not necessarily a cause for evacuation.
2. Group discipline and group decision should be maintained, but it is recognized that in certain circumstances individual decisions must be made.
3. The primary obligation of the Board of Missions is to do everything possible to help maintain and enrich the witness of the church, especially in times of political stress in any part of the world.
4. When any situation becomes serious enough for withdrawal of missionaries to be considered, it is expected that before any action is taken the missionary (or missionaries) seek counsel from colleagues in the national church, from bishops and district superintendents, from executive secretaries, and take into account the advice of the United States State Department. It is understood that in some cases time does not permit counsel with the division. Normally, the decision to evacuate is made on the field, but the

division reserves the right in extreme circumstances to recommend to missionaries that they evacuate.

5. When evacuation is deemed necessary, it will generally be sufficient that the missionary go to another point in the same country or to some nearby point in another country rather than return at once to his home in the United States.¹⁵

From the standpoint of the Board of Missions, it was clear that no missionaries were going to be evacuated from Zimbabwe because of the UDI. Because Dodge was not in Zimbabwe, the Board of Missions decided to leave the decision to evacuate up to the missionaries themselves. While none of the missionaries were evacuated, some of them were unclear about their future as well as the intentions of the UDI. In a January 4 letter, Rev. Thomas Curtis, a district superintendent, wrote to Bishop Dodge expressing the unpreparedness of the church to respond to the UDI. Rev. Curtis writes: "I am writing now especially to ask your counsel. Ever since UDI and of course even before I have been greatly concerned about what our position should be while in this country in terms of public statements."¹⁶

As Dodge waited to see how the country, the church and his missionaries would respond to the UDI, in a letter dated February 6, 1966, Eunice writes about their experiences of being in exile. She writes that since they were deported from Zimbabwe, it had been "18 months of frustration for Ralph to be kept out of his episcopal area"¹⁷ and that it was painful for her to see her husband being away from something he loved to do. However, she writes that being in exile had helped the two of them grow closer together. She writes,

The strains and stresses and pressures of life during the last few years in Rhodesia made it difficult for us to have as good a family life as we had usually had. Ralph was away most weekends, holding district meetings, dedicating churches, speaking at men's meetings and he spent long hours in the office during the week. Even when he was at home he was often absent minded, with weighty matters always on his mind. These months of being alone in Zambia have given us a chance to grow closer.”¹⁸

While Dodge had felt unsupported by his colleagues in the Council of Bishops when he was deported, they would ask him to assume episcopal duties in the Central Europe and North Africa when the bishop of the area, Bishop Sigg of Switzerland, fell ill in early November. As a result, The Council of Bishops asked Dodge to preside over the annual conferences in North Africa and Europe. Thus, when Bishop Sigg subsequently passed away, the council assigned Dodge and Bishop Barber of North Carolina to Europe, dividing the Geneva Area between the two bishops. Dodge was assigned to cover the areas of Algeria, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Switzerland, Tunisia and Yugoslavia.

From January to September 1966, Dodge lived in Zurich and led the church in Europe and North Africa. He came back to Zambia in April to prepare for the annual Conference meeting in Zimbabwe which was scheduled for May 3-8. Once again, when he applied for a permit to enter Zimbabwe for the annual conference he was denied. However, he had already made arrangements that Bishop Shungu of Congo would travel to Zimbabwe for the Annual Conference in case he was denied entry. So Bishop Shungu flew into Harare for the annual conference and was denied to enter Zimbabwe at the airport. Bishop Shungu was never allowed again to enter Rhodesia. Since there was no

bishop to preside over the conference the delegates at the Annual Conference meeting at Nyadiri elected Rev. Jonah Kawadza as the presiding president of the annual conference.

More graduates returned from overseas and they were assigned in various mission centers and Methodist institutions. Bishop Dodge later made arrangements with Bishop Otto Nall of Minnesota to visit Zimbabwe in September, 1966 to ordain pastors who were supposed to be ordained at the annual conference meeting in May. Such were the growing challenges of having a bishop in exile.

In March 1966, William Humbane had traveled with his family to Mozambique to visit his mother who was sick. While in Beira on his way to Maputo, he was arrested by the Portuguese police. By this time the war of liberation led by Dr. Eduardo Mondlane's Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) with its headquarters in Tanzania was raging in Mozambique. The Portuguese Police impounded Humbane's car and left his wife Maria and children by themselves in Beira. Humbane was transferred to Maputo as a prisoner where he was tortured. He was charged for recruiting bandits and sending them to Tanzania. It was a trumped –up charge since Humbane had been with Bishop Dodge since 1956. Finally convinced that he was innocent, they took him back to Beira and released him in April. His wife and children had already returned to Zimbabwe fearing for their life in Mozambique and proceeded to Zambia to live with Mrs. Dodge at Mindolo while Bishop Dodge was in Zurich.

After his release in Beira, William Humbane went back to Zimbabwe and upon learning that his family had moved to Zambia, Humbane followed. He arrived at Mindolo the same time Bishop Dodge arrived in Zambia from Zurich to prepare for the annual

conference in Zimbabwe. Humbane was physically in bad shape because of the beating he received in Maputo. Seeing William Humbane's wounds, Bishop Dodge was deeply troubled and it made him change a part of policy which required students studying overseas to return to their home countries upon graduation. In a letter dated May 16, 1966 to Dodge, Dr. Orville Mckay, president of Garrett Theological Seminary wrote to Dodge about a student who was not willing to go back to his home country after his studies at Garrett. Dr. Mckay writes, "You may know that Gabriel Simbine elected to stay in this country and pursue graduate studies at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. It was my hope that he might return to Africa and begin to make his contribution there."¹⁹

Unlike what he had done to Mushangazhike and Emouga the previous year to insist that the two return to Zimbabwe, Bishop Dodge softened his stance on Gabriel and later with many other students. His reply to Dr. Mckay on June 1, 1966 shows that Bishop Dodge was a leader who when circumstances changed he was willing to change his position on policies even when such policies were written in bold. Part of his letter to Dr. Mckay says,

Do not be too disappointed in Gabriel. Eunice and I were just discussing his situation and I rather feel that he has chosen wisely. To return to Mozambique just at this time would be almost certain imprisonment if not worse. My secretary was badly beaten by the police when he went home to visit his family earlier this year. Anyone with Gabriel's potential might receive much harsher treatment. Gabriel will be heard from in the years ahead and you will be proud of the part you had in his training.²⁰

His ability to re-evaluate policies and seeking to do what was in the best interest of an individual and the church was one of things that people in Zimbabwe loved about Bishop Dodge. This is why one of his district superintendents had said about him, “There are several things which stand out to me about the Bishop Dodge: his tireless efforts to preach the full gospel with all its social implications; the desire to be completely fair in handling personnel and the complete giving of himself to all who came in need without partiality.”²¹ His softened stance on this policy did not mean that he did not expect the students to return to their home countries but he treated each case differently with its own merits. Even with his changed stance on the return policy, the majority of students went back to Zimbabwe and offered their services to the church first.

As for William Humbane, Bishop Dodge secured a scholarship for him and his family to go to Taylor University. After ten years of working for Bishop Dodge and seeing his colleagues being sent overseas for studies, Bishop Dodge finally gave him his chance. Humbane had traveled with Bishop Dodge in many villages in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge left Zambia sometime in June and went to Zurich for Dodge to continue with his assignment in Europe and North Africa. The Central Conference for Europe called for a special session in Lausanne, Switzerland in October 1966 to elect a new bishop and Bishop Franz Schaffer was elected. After the election of the new bishop, the Dodges left Zurich for the USA to attend a special meeting of the General Conference of the Methodist Church which was scheduled in November, 1966 in Chicago. Bishop Dodge was there when Methodists voted overwhelming to join with the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

It was in 1959 when the Dodges last celebrated Christmas in the USA. In December, 1966 there were many changes in the Dodge family. Ed. Jr and family were now based in Baltimore, Maryland because Ed. was on a three year residency at John Hopkins Hospital. Ed and Nancy had given Bishop Dodge Mrs. Dodge a granddaughter. Her name was Amy Ruth. Clifford had married and had two sons and a daughter when Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge visited him in Youngstown, Ohio where he was working for General Motors after he left the military. Lois and her husband John Stewart were in Brussels, Belgium where she was teaching English at an International School. Peggy was still in college. Bishop Dodge, Mrs. Dodge and Peggy spent Christmas in Baltimore with Ed's family.

The Long Separation

One of the assumptions that was always made about Bishop Dodge was that he earned a lot of money as a bishop. It was never the case for the most part. When he left his position in with the Board of Missions as the Division Secretary, to become bishop, his salary dipped very significantly. His salary further dipped in 1964 when the Africa Central Conference met in 1964 at Mulungwishi and made a decision to elect two more bishops. The decision to elect two more bishops was based on the need to effectively supervise the work of the Methodist Church in Angola and Mozambique because Bishop Dodge was no longer able to visit these two countries. The General Conference had not budgeted to finance salaries for two more bishops, but what the Central Conference did was to cut in half the salaries and allowances of Bishop Booth and Bishop Dodge to be

able to pay for the other two. (Bishop Booth retired in 1964). The annual salary for Bishop Dodge and the other bishops in the Central Conference was \$5,000. After the Central Conference at Mulungwishi, Mrs. Dodge had said to her husband, “May be I can find work. The new salary is impossible. Peggy’s expenses at Lycoming College will take most of it... We have enough saved for her first semester, and may be for the first year.”²² Bishop Dodge would later say, “We finished twelve years of active episcopacy, the last four on salary of \$5,000 a year. Many friends in America cannot understand why we live so differently from our American jurisdictional episcopal colleagues. Only in retirement are we on a financial par with them.”²³

Because of their financial situation, Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge were forced in 1967 to live very far from each other for a whole year: one in New York and the other in Zambia because Mrs. Dodge got a job with the Laubach Literacy Program which was based in Syracuse, New York. So, Mrs. Dodge remained in the United States while Bishop Dodge returned to Zambia. It was a financial decision but it also turned to be providential especially for Mrs. Dodge because her mother Mrs. Mavis Davis had a stroke and later died while she was staying with her parents in Little Valley, New York. It was providential because it would have been a struggle financially for Mrs. Dodge to attend to her mother and mourn her like she did.

On May 2, Mrs. Dodge wrote to her husband saying, “Honey, it was only about three weeks after you left that Mother had her first stroke! I never dreamed this would come so soon. So many people in Little Valley have talked about how much of a miracle they feel it is that I am here at this time.”²⁴ Mrs. Davis died on May 3, and the following

day Mrs. Dodge wrote a letter to her husband asking him to “Please write Dad. He is so overwhelmed! He always wanted to go first.”²⁵

On May 10, Bishop Dodge wrote a letter to his father in-law in a very personal but pastoral manner. Mr. Davis had helped his son in-law in many ways especially financially when he needed help. It was his turn to help his father in-law in his time of need. In the letter he addressed his father in-law as Dad,

My heart goes out to you in sympathetic understanding. Yet in real sense, it is only the Holy Spirit who can heal these deep and painful emotional and psychological wounds. Therefore we commit you to Him who alone is able to comfort and reestablish. We are confident that your faith nourished through years will sustain you even during this time of terrible cleavage. These next few weeks will be especially hard for you as you readjust to bitter aloneness of life. After nearly sixty years of constant and congenial companionship, it is not going to be easy...God has been good in giving you Mother, and your children, grandchildren, and great-grand-children. It is on the remembrance of the good things of the past that we build the future.²⁶

It must have been a very difficult experience for the two to live far from each other. At Mindolo Bishop Dodge spent most of his time alone writing and when he was not writing, he was meeting with students. He also began to play badminton for his exercises. His neighbor at Mindolo, Mrs. Bengt wrote a letter to Eunice on April 17 saying,

His [Bishop Dodge] social life, according to himself is almost nil, for he works most of the time. I believe he has a good relationship with the students, which may be his natural, seeing that he spends so much time with them at mealtimes. We try to make him feel welcome over here as often as he feels like it, but most of the time he just works, and therefore I was glad to see him come out of his flat dressed in sports clothes this afternoon, heading for the badminton court.²⁷

For the first time in their marriage they celebrated their anniversary away from each other and Bishop Dodge wrote a letter on June 21 which shows how much he missed his wife.

In the letter he says,

Tomorrow (a week) is our anniversary. Thirty three years is a nice number to remember. In many ways it seems longer, so packed full of significant events have they been. In other ways it seems much shorter, so kind and good have the years been and so packed full of satisfaction and pleasure. For all these things, I want to say thank you... Well, dear, have a happy anniversary and may it be the last one that finds us separated by eight thousand miles or for that matter by any miles.²⁸

His loneliness in missing his wife shows up in many of his letters to her. In one letter he writes, "I am not in a bad mood but just a chatty one and want to talk with you as if you are here."²⁹ In another he says, "Water is hot for a cup of coffee! Wish you were here to share one with me!"³⁰ Again in another he writes, "I think I am losing weight and am hungry most of the time. Wish that I were there or you were here."³¹ Later in the year in a letter addressed to "colleagues in and from Rhodesia," Bishop Dodge told them, "Mrs. Dodge and I have both found this prolonged separation very difficult. We hope that it will be the last."³² In the same letter though he opens up about what kept him occupied, "... my time has been fairly well occupied. In addition to considerable correspondence regarding the work in Rhodesia and two meetings with Cabinet, I have done some

enjoyable substitute volunteer teaching here at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation and considerable writing.”³³

Sometimes when two people who have shared life, love and ministry together find themselves separated by thousands of miles like Bishop Dodge and wife were, they find something about the other person which they keep close, to constantly remind them of the special place the other person occupies in one’s life. For some it is a picture and for others it is just the memories of special places or events the two experienced together. For Bishop Dodge it was the letter that his wife had written to him on February 10, 1967 a few weeks after Bishop Dodge left Mrs. Dodge in New York. Whenever he felt lonely and whenever he thought of his wife during the long months of separation, Dodge read that letter. It is the only letter available that Mrs. Dodge wrote to her husband in which we can understand how deep their relationship was. Mrs. Dodge writes,

Dearest,

It isn’t often that I try to put down on paper my appreciation of you. Nor, I fear, that I say many words of praise, either. In fact, I don’t think I’m much good at giving praise to anybody for anything. It is probably an exaggerated attempt from early childhood not to say anything that could be considered flattery. Rusty old hinges don’t swing open without difficulty, so it is that unused as am I to saying words of appreciation, they come awkwardly. Nevertheless, I want to set down for this Valentine’s Day some honest thoughts about the man who is the keeper of my heart.

As you know I am not a gushing sort of dame, but all the same I want to say that one of the first things I noticed about you – way back in 1928 – was your chivalry. Always a gentleman was what I wrote to my family about the chap I was dating. And you keep it, too, when we’ve been married, these many years: whether I say so or not, I like it.

Manly, too. Nothing effeminate about my man! And not only manly, but also courageous. A man with the courage of his convictions. A man with enough courage to suffer for his convictions, if necessary.

From some hidden source, you scrape up great faith in your fellow man – even after times of disillusionment. How you keep that characteristic has always been a mystery to me. Especially do you show great patience with the ones who are least attractive to others. The over-aggressive once, ornery ones, the hard-to-get-along-with ones. And the timid ones like me. Many is the thing I have done (never thinking I could do) just because you expected it of me. If I'm any better at anything now than I was in the green years, it's because you've been behind me – or with me – or out there ahead of me.

I'm still too serious minded, but your sense of humor is a leavening influence. I came to you full of inhibitions and you have helped me shed a lot of them. I came naïve as could be -- from the sheltered kind of life; I'll never be a convention – breaker, but I've learned a lot of tolerance.

It used to worry me that you never seemed to worry about me. I feared it was a sign you didn't care much. So, it was a grain of comfort when you said the other day that you worry more about leaving me in Syracuse than you ever did in Africa! Now, I really know, down deep, that you have too good psychology to put fears into others by worrying out aloud about what might happen. It worked with kids. You never expressed a doubt to them but what they could do whatever needed to be done. And they stretched themselves to come up to your expectations.

No, I don't claim you are a perfect man -- you have a fault or two. But how could you stand me if you were perfect? Sometimes I wonder about that anyway. Anyway, in my sober-minded way, I love you. You come first with me always. I don't often succeed in guessing what will please most, but I keep trying. I love all our children, too; but if there is a choice to be made, then I choose you.

I am going to miss you in the months ahead. I am going to have dreary days. I know. I've been through it before. But never for so long. I must trust the Lord will help me through. Things won't be easy for you either. Maybe more exciting. Maybe frustrating. But, wherever you are, I pray for our Father to keep you safe and bring you back to the one whose heart you keep.

Always your, Eunice.

Bishop Dodge's position on social issues

Bishop Dodge's relationship with people was that of mutual respect such that a lot of people sought his opinion and advice on personal issues. A lot of his time at Mindolo was spent writing personal letters to counsel people on very personal issues. Some people traveled from Zimbabwe to Mindolo just to talk to Bishop Dodge. A few cases stand out. In one incident Bishop Dodge wrote a letter to his wife telling her about a conversation he had had with one of the graduates that had returned from overseas. One of the young men who had returned home from overseas through the education program impregnated a girl he considered uneducated and he did not want to marry her. So the young man came to Bishop Dodge and told him the whole story. The young man then asked Bishop Dodge, "Can a Christian have an abortion performed? Some people say that an abortion is murder. What do you think?"³⁴ In counseling the young man and in the subsequent letter Bishop Dodge wrote to the young man, he articulated his position on a very contentious issue of abortion in the church even up to now. In the letter he says,

There are times when under medical advice an abortion may be justified to save life of a mother or for some other adequate reason. An abortion just to do away with an unwanted human embryo is never justified. No, I cannot recommend abortion... Neither the Church nor society in general looks with approval upon indiscriminate abortions. I wish that we had a chance to talk about these matters of responsibility in sex before you had become so seriously involved with the girl.³⁵

In another case Bishop Dodge wrote a letter to Zachariah Gwanzura, the first African high school principal he appointed at Old Mutare Center. On July 28, 1967 the headmaster wrote a letter to Bishop Dodge telling him how difficult the work was at the

Methodist Center and stating that the bishop's guiding hand would have made things easier for him at Old Mutare. So he wanted to ask the bishop if he could go to a government college to teach or to go back to school for further studies. Bishop Dodge replied the headmaster saying, "I would hope that you might consider moving to another of our centers rather than outside our system. Would not Murewa, Mutambara or Nyamuzuwe be acceptable? We need to conserve your experience in administration within our own organization."³⁶ Mr. Gwanzura ended up staying at Old Mutare until he got sponsorship for a Ph.D program in the United Kingdom through the Crusade Scholarship.

Again in another case he received a letter from a missionary whose daughter was in love with an African and they were intending to get married. The missionary wanted the Bishop's opinion and Bishop Dodge advised him. It is in these kinds of advices he gave others that he opened up on what he believed about an issue, in this case on cross cultural and racial marriages. To the missionary he writes,

It is not easy to advise you about the family problem which you are facing for two reasons: I have never lived in Ghana and I do not know the young Ghanaian. In general I think that mixed marriages have a more difficult time of adjustment than do marriages between young people of similar backgrounds. Having said that, I should hurriedly add that so much depends upon the young people involved. If the young man is sincere and honourable and if your daughter does not mind the heat of Ghana and can adjust to the radically different living conditions and be happy while doing so, then I see no reason why they should not continue with their friendship. A number of the African young men which our Methodist Church has sent for studies in Europe and America have married white women. Knowing the young people involved, I approved, I have approved several of these marriages. I would not disapprove my daughter marrying a black man because of his colour. It seems to me that so much depends on

the character of the man and woman concerned. May the Holy Spirit reveal His will in this important matter.³⁷

Following his conversation with the young man who asked him about abortion Bishop Dodge wrote *The Church and Sex*. He wanted to teach the young people in the church about self-discipline and restraint. He completely taught sexual abstinence for unmarried young people because he believed that sexual relationships out of wedlock were harmful.

Sex will never reveal its deepest meaning and tender emotions to those who experience it only at the physical level and in furtive and chance encounter. It is impossible to quickly or clandestinely tap the deeper spiritual meaning of the sex experience arising out of love and mutual and self-giving. Those who approach sex on the purely physical level may have difficulty in penetrating its spiritual depth. But when approached in love, restraint and self-giving, the sexual act can be a highly gratifying and deeply spiritual experience. On the other hand, stolen fruit, quickly plucked and hurriedly eaten, is seldom highly nourishing and may be extremely harmful.

By teaching the young people to abstain from pre-marital sexual relationships, Dodge was actually strengthening part of the Shona culture that valued sexual purity for unmarried young people. In the Shona culture, as the “boy and girl approach adulthood all teaching is directed towards proper sex relationships. They are taught that by behaving in this manner it is possible for people to be fully happy.”³⁸

One major writing project Bishop Dodge accomplished in 1967 during his long separation from his wife was the writing of his second book, *The Pagan Church: The Protestant Failure in America*. Unlike in *The Unpopular Missionary* where he addressed the concerns of the Africans about the relevance of the church in Africa, in *The Pagan Church*, Bishop Dodge offered a stinging critique of the American church especially the

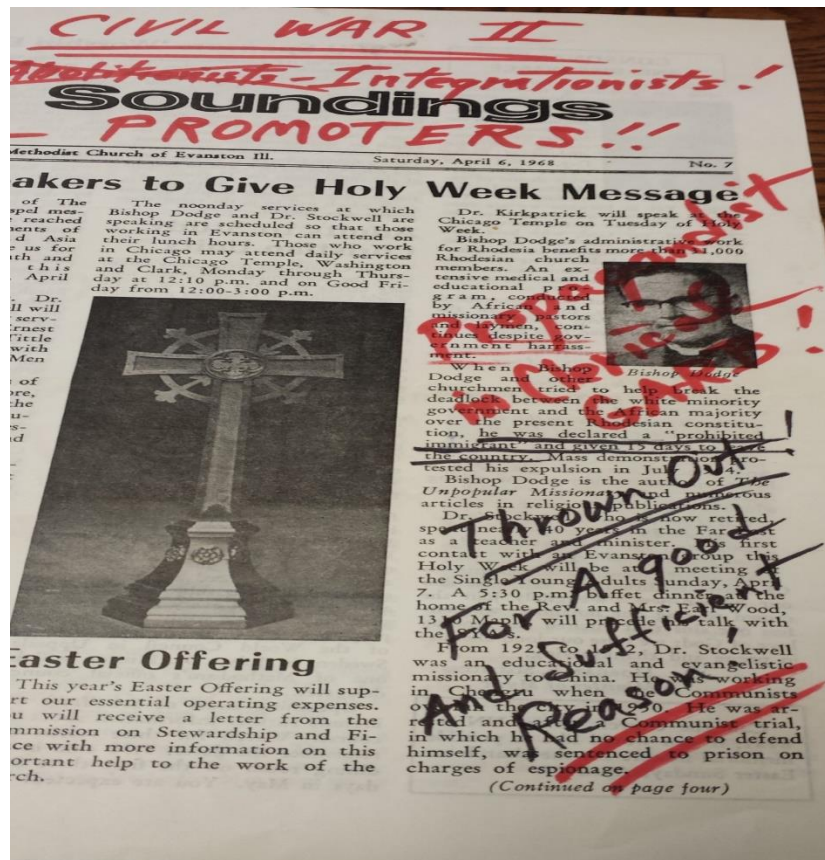
United Methodist Church for what he believed were policies and practices that were self-centered. He writes,

I love my church for the spiritual nourishment, the challenge, and the opportunities for service that she has given me. At the same time I am troubled about her because she has grown old, conservative, respectable, and proud. At one time she set out to save the world – and that in one generation. Now she seems more anxious to save her structure, rigid and worn though it be. At one time she sent our circuit riders to proclaim their faith along the frontier; now she seems cautious lest she become too involved everywhere.

She may well be anxious about her future, for the moment the church – or any individual or group – becomes self-centered, she begins to write her own epitaph: “She became ill when she grew too exclusive to identify with the poor and socially downtrodden; she worsened because she no longer desired to lose herself in service.”³⁹

It is not far-fetched to suggest that after Bishop Dodge was deported from Zimbabwe the American churches that once supported his projects including the Safari to Learning program began to view him differently such that his fundraising campaigns in 1965 and 1966 were not very successful. Bishop Dodge began to be viewed by some churches as a “propagandist in clerical garb,” “left wing pastor” or “integrationist promoter.”⁴⁰ When he preached at First Methodist Church Evanston in Illinois, some people in the church scribbled on the church’s newsletter these words and handed him on their way out of the church. This disappointed Bishop Dodge and when you add that the Board of Missions had tried to terminate his education program, he felt he needed to speak to a culture that had become deeply individualistic to influence the decision of the church.

Bishop Dodge felt that such the American church had become too comfortable and influenced by a consumeristic culture where Christians chose “to invest in monuments rather than in men, in bonds rather than in brothers, in yachts rather than in young people.”⁴¹ For this reason the American church had become a pagan church.



Bishop Dodge was handed a copy of the church’s newsletter scribbled with these words after he preached at the church in Evanston, IL.

Bishop Dodge felt that what the American church was experiencing was a spiritual problem than needed a spiritual solution and a return to the true meaning of the gospel. He writes,

First we must seek a spiritual solution for ourselves. This means that we must surrender our wills to the divine will... The Holy Spirit regulates our relationship both to God and our fellow men. He removes colored glasses from our eyes and masks from our faces. He leads us into new truth. His presence within us generates filial love, which reaches up to God, and brotherly self-giving love, which goes out to our fellow men wherever they may be found.⁴²

While Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge were revered and praised as role models for young people in Africa, in 1967 they experienced the agony of dealing with issues of faith with their own children, Ed and Peggy. Bishop Dodge and wife were highly educated people who could have been in any other good paying career. However, the ministry of serving God as a missionary had never been about money for the Dodges. It was about answering God's call. It was for this reason that when Eunice wrote a letter to Peggy on her nineteenth birthday, she told her that as her parents, they were completely satisfied with their missionary career.⁴³ Both parents must have been overwhelmed with joy when Ed and Peggy told them that they too wanted to become missionaries like them.

In 1966 Ed applied to become a missionary with the Board of Missions and the Board was working to process his application as a medical doctor. However, by August 1967, Ed had a change of theological convictions that would make it difficult for the Board of Missions to accept him. He was denying the Trinity and accepting Jesus only as an inspired moral teacher. He had become perhaps a Unitarian, although in a letter to his father he said, "I think perhaps the term Christian Agnostic would apply to me."⁴⁴ Mrs. Dodge and Ed had a conversation that left her very troubled about her son's new found theological convictions which contrary to what she believed and had raised her children to believe. She wrote a lengthy letter to her husband in Zambia:

Ever since the long talks with Ed – I have not been happy. Ed doesn't think he can be a missionary because of his beliefs now. He no longer believes that Jesus was divine or that He himself thought he was the Son of God. Ed has joined the ranks of those who think Jesus was a man, a wonderful teacher, but a man. Ed doesn't even think he can call himself a Christian anymore. He believes in God, but thinks that Mahommed was a teacher like Jesus to point people to God. He claims all this has been an agonizing experience for him but that he has come to it by reading the Gospels.

After listening to Ed I didn't think what Ed was saying was going to upset me so much. I didn't act shocked or argue with him... But back here, in my solitude, surrounded by jobs I don't want to do, I get more and more distressed. I have been re-reading the Gospels myself to see if I can find any basis for Ed's conclusions, and I find only more proof that Jesus was the Son of God. How could Ed change so much?⁴⁵

While they were dealing with new theological convictions of their son Ed, Peggy too was having difficulty filling the Board of Missions application form to become a missionary. She felt the questions she was being asked to answer on the form were hypocritical. Writing to her father she says,

I just got the application from the Board of Missions today and started to fill it in, but I couldn't do it. Pop, it is sickening, I feel so sad and empty. I wanted to go back to Rhodesia under the Board, but I can't. I got so disgusted by some of their questions, and their concerns are trivial... I really wanted to give them a fair try. I know this is hurting you because this is your life. So I have decided to give the Peace Corps a try.⁴⁶

In both cases Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge were initially excited about seeing their children follow in their footsteps, and now as parents they had to speak with their children not as missionaries or Bishop, but as parents. On October 4th, 1967 Bishop

Dodge wrote a family letter in which he addressed issues affecting his children. He writes,

Forget about your dad and mom. We have lived our lives and have got a lot of joy out of it in spite of certain bruises along the way. If we have failed in transmitting to you an awareness of the Divine, our failure has been great indeed. It is this sense of the Divine will that has led us into strange places.⁴⁷

Later, on March 17, 1968 Ed Jr. withdrew his application from the Board of Missions in a letter which he also copied his father. In the letter he writes,

The basic change that has evolved in our thinking over the past few years has to do with Christ. To put the matter plainly, I no longer believe that men must come to know Christ in order to know the love of God. I am convinced that Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Moslems, or any persons of any other religious persuasion can be just as godly as Christians (or more so). I believe that Jesus was human and not God, even though God's spirit was manifest in him in a most remarkable way. Incidentally, I feel more and more that John 14:6 is very unChrist-like in its spirit. Because of these changes in our outlook (although Nancy's views have not necessarily changed as much as mine) we feel that we cannot in good conscience become missionaries for the church...⁴⁸

Bishop Dodge's exile years from the work of the Methodist Church are poignantly expressed in his October 16th letter addressed to "colleagues in and from Rhodesia" when he writes, "I have tried to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit into doors which are open. I assure you that being on the sideline rather than on the playing field has not been easy."⁴⁹ For someone who was used to be on the mission field, whether it was in the Dembos baptizing people in the river, or canoeing along the Cuanza River with a bout of malaria to go and hold a district conference, or leading pastors'

schools and annual conferences in Zimbabwe, and commissioning students to go and study abroad: it was not easy to be confined at Mindolo and wait to substitute teach and writing letters and articles.

Things in Zimbabwe were not changing. The economic sanctions against Ian Smith's government were not working. Rather, Smith was strengthening his rule. By now every black political party was banned and their leaders were either in prison or out of the country. The optimism that had come with the independence of Malawi and Zambia in the previous years had faded away. Bishop Dodge was not a fool to not see that it would be years before he was allowed to enter Zimbabwe. And he knew the Methodist Church needed a leader who was on the playing field and not on the sidelines.

Therefore, he began to seriously consider taking an early retirement. This was not an easy decision to make because he had not yet reached retirement age. Already the hidden and clandestine fights in Zimbabwe especially among the clergy to replace Bishop Dodge had started and were significantly reflected at the Annual Conference in May, 1967 which again Rev. Kawadza was elected to chair because Bishop Dodge was denied entry and no bishop was available to preside over the conference. Bishop Zunguze of Mozambique was denied entry in Zimbabwe to preside over the Annual Conference. The election of delegates to the General Conference meeting of the following year had clearly revealed the fight to replace Bishop Dodge. Rev. Jonah Kawadza and Rev. Abel Muzorewa had wrestled it out for the clergy delegate. Eventually it was Rev. Kawadza who was elected and Rev. Muzorewa did not even make it for the alternate delegate. Mrs. Dodge's 18th May letter hints about the Dodge's feeling about Rev. Kawadza. She writes, "Had a long letter from Hunter since I talked to you, full of conference news... Hunter

still seems to feel even with all of his shortcomings that Jonah is the best man for the job and that he did a better job this year than last as chairman – a lot of controversial issues didn't come to blows....”⁵⁰

Bishop Dodge's evaluation of his own work

On October 20, 1967, the eleventh anniversary of his consecration as bishop, Bishop Dodge wrote a letter to some church leaders in Zimbabwe in which he said it was time for him to take an inventory of the gains and losses, strength and weakness of the Methodist Conference of Zimbabwe. He writes, “The gains which have been made are God's and ours for the effort has been cooperative and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.”⁵¹ He listed four areas under his leadership as bishop where the Methodist Church had made significant gains.

First, Bishop Dodge stated that under his leadership, the Methodist Church had experienced significant transfer of authority, leadership, and power from missionaries to nationals. He stated that he was excited about this gain because “in its structure and control, the Conference is largely African.”⁵²

The second gain was related to the on-going training of Africans to complete the transfer of authority from missionaries to nationals. He writes, “It is not yet completed but great gains have been made during the past eleven years. This process must never stop but it is unlikely that so spectacular a spurt will ever be made again as was realized in the decade 1956 – 1966.”⁵³

Third, Bishop Dodge celebrated that during his leadership the Methodist Church had improved in the building of the church's infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, residences, or church buildings. "We have a physical plant second to none in Rhodesia and possibly in all Africa."⁵⁴

Finally, the Methodist Church's stand on important issues that affected the common person in the village or township was commendable. He writes, "No one needs to apologize when he says that he is a Conference Methodist. We have been in trying to work out the Christian teachings in the society around us. This involvement has been costly for some but it has been good for the church. People know that we stand for something honourable, just, and good."⁵⁵

Bishop Dodge then turned to the two equally important areas he felt the Methodist Church had moved slowly or not done so well. He accepted that under his leadership, the numerical growth of the Methodist Church was at a very slow rate. "There is something wrong with our approach unless we bring more people into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and tie their loyalties firmly to the church. We created a large amount of good will but not sufficient dedication to Christ."⁵⁶ Bishop Dodge was side tracked by the numbers reported but had he thought of his decision to ignore the comity agreements, he would have realized that in the eleven years under review, he had made decisions that strategically placed the Methodist church for a future explosion of the church. In almost every major African township there was a Methodist congregation. From these first congregations in each major city, many more congregations would be created for example, from Harare Methodist Church which Bishop Dodge dedicated in 1958, four congregations were created in Highfields, Mabvuku, Mufakose and Kambuzuma. Today,

in Harare only, there are four United Methodist Districts which all trace their history to the five Congregations started under Bishop Dodge.

The second area where Bishop Dodge mourned that the Church had not done well was the failure of the Africans to equally support the church financially. He writes, “We are still a subjected people financially. We have never learned to give as we should. We have been developing a receiving rather than a giving congregation. Consequently we are dependent upon Europe and America for our existence. This MUST cease.”⁵⁷ The issue of financial support is one that Bishop Dodge had in many cases written strong words to officials at the Board of Missions. Because they financed most programs of the church, they dictated even the smallest items in Zimbabwe while they were in New York. And Bishop Dodge never liked it because he always felt like the people in New York were treating the people in Zimbabwe as incapable of running things. For example, on July 12, 1967 a letter was sent to Bishop Dodge querying an increase in mileage charges that BOFAC had approved. Juel Nordby, writing on behalf of the Board on Missions says,

Neither Miss Deyo nor Dr. Blake has approved of this increase and I would appreciate to receive considered justification before it can be approved. You realize that such an increase in the mileage rate would involve transport cost and as we will not be able to provide additional funds, this means that funds for the work will be short. Please let me hear from you regarding this item.⁵⁸

This kind of budget controls by the New York office is something Bishop Dodge seemed not to like and whenever he responded one could feel his pain and anguish. In response to Juel Nordby’s letter, Bishop Dodge writes,

I am certain that you folks in New York don't want to give the impression that you know more about the cost of car maintenance in Rhodesia than those on the field. With Rhodesian roads a bit different from those you use and the cost of gas about a dollar a gallon, conditions here vary considerably from your...How minute control are you trying to exercise over funds released to the field? May we not have an opportunity to gain some experiences ourselves in administration? If some of us begin walking during November and December because our funds are short is that not better experience than always depending upon you to make every decision for us? We have tried to be responsible in setting a new travel rate. You in New York don't like it. On the basis of your research what do you think the rates should be?⁵⁹

Such responses were sharp and strong. Bishop Dodge wanted the Africans to support the church financially so that they would not be controlled to the smallest budget item. He also did not enjoy writing the kind of letters like he wrote to the Board. So he felt that in the eleven years he had been bishop, the church had moved slowly in becoming a self-supporting church.

Bishop Dodge's evaluation of the gains and losses of the church under his leadership only further strengthened the idea that he was ready to retire. This prompted a wave of letters from Zimbabweans calling on Bishop Dodge not to resign. Mr. Naboth Gandanzara, the district lay leader of Mutasa-Makoni District wrote a letter to Bishop Dodge stating, "Allow me to request you Bishop not to resign from the leadership of the Rhodesian Church under these conditions. I think you already know how we the Nationals are easily confused. You will soon hear struggles of power. Hold on to the key because we still want you to help us and our youth a little more."⁶⁰

Why turn from Gospel to politics?

Bishop Dodge had planned to attend a Council of Bishops meeting in mid-November in Miami, Florida. He would stay in the United States until after the General Conference meeting in April 1968. But as the senior bishop in the Africa Central Conference, he was tasked to make arrangements for the Central Conference meeting for August 1968. Bishop Dodge chose Gaborone, Botswana as the city to host the Central Conference. He travelled to Gaborone to make the reservations for the Central Conference at a government boarding school and when all was set, he flew to New York and was received by Mrs. Dodge at the airport on November 7, after nearly a year they had lived far from each other.

If Bishop Dodge thought he had visited the United States to attend the Council of Bishop's meeting, visit family, probably speak in few churches, attend the General Conference meeting and then go back to Zambia then he was wrong because before he left Africa he had picked up a fight with Major Allister Smith in the articles they had written in the World Vision magazine. Major Allister Smith was a South African Salvation Army officer who is widely known for his organized prayers for missionaries, passion for world-wide revival of the church. The fight spilled from writing articles in the World Vision magazine to writing each other personal letters. Major Allister Smith's letter of January 11, 1968 to Bishop Dodge is very important because it carries the many sentiments that he was criticized about by some of his missionaries in Zimbabwe and by some in the church in the USA. One label that was constantly given him was that he was liberal in his theology, and that politically he was comfortable with communism. No

other person clearly laid out these charges to him openly and strongly than Major Allister Smith.

In his letter to Bishop Dodge, Major Smith says that he was born and raised at a mission station in South Africa. He became a magistrate in South Africa and left that career to become a missionary having served in Ghana and Nigeria. At the time of his writing to Bishop Dodge, he was a travelling evangelist based in Capetown. The letter was long but some few issues which Major Allister Smith writes in the letter are important because of how Bishop Dodge responded on January 31, 1968. Major Allister Smith writes,

Dear Bishop Dodge,

... Instead of criticizing God-fearing governments in Southern Africa, where there is peace and prosperity, I wish you could do something to clean up USA with its bad films, pornographic literature, sex perverts... Why strain a gnat and swallow a camel? Why turn from gospel to politics? Is it not better to win one soul for Christ than integrate a thousand who continue on their way to a lost eternity? But maybe, you do not believe there is a hell or that all are lost sinners until born again through faith in a crucified and risen Savior...⁶¹

The criticism that Bishop Dodge was not qualified to speak against racism, segregation and the right of Africans to vote when his own home country was practicing the same against the minorities was not new. In many of his writings he had criticized such practices in his own country. In fact the only time he had gone to watch a baseball game in 1952, he had done so because he wanted to watch Jackie Robinson of the Brooklyn Dodgers play.⁶² However, it was when his faith in Jesus Christ was questioned

that he responded. He replied to Major Allister Smith stating, “As you know, I too am a missionary, having gone to Angola 32 years ago. I believe in the power of the gospel to redeem individuals. I have experienced that power in my own life and have seen it operative in the lives of others.”⁶³ Having been influenced by the social gospel theology, Bishop Dodge’s understanding of salvation went further than Mr. Smith’s for while Mr. Smith would have preferred one soul coming to Christ than a thousand integrated Dodge says, “I discredit confessions of salvation in which there are no outward signs of inner cleansing. One of the sure signs of the inner working of grace is the practice of justice in relationship to others.”⁶⁴

On the issues that really mattered for Bishop Dodge, Mr. Smith writes,

I neither condemn nor condone apartheid nor do I practice it. I stand where our Lord Jesus stood. He never (so far as we know) denounced or approved four things, viz slavery, war, polygamy, or segregation. He came “to seek and save the lost,” not to solve political problems or denounce Roman imperialism. It is a pity you political priests do not follow His example. Had Peter denounced segregation at Pentecost, he would have divided his listeners, and diverted them from their spiritual need. He would not have won 3, let alone 3, 000. There would have been a riot.⁶⁵

For Bishop Dodge, the commandment to love God and neighbor was foundational to build a just society. To not condemn apartheid was to fail to love a neighbor. In responding to Mr. Smith’s position on apartheid Bishop Dodge writes, “Your strong emotional support of apartheid is also difficult to understand within the framework of Christian charity and justice. And to find the law of Christian love operative in conditions of slavery, war, polygamy and apartheid is most difficult for me to follow.”⁶⁶

Finally, Major Smith invites Bishop Dodge to commit to bring revival in Africa as a way of combating communism. He writes,

It is a delusion to think you must solve political problems and denounce so-called oppressors (according to your ideas and prejudices) before one can preach the gospel. That was not the method of Jesus or the Apostles... It is much easier for you to dabble in politics than to win souls... If preachers like you who continually attack Rhodesia and South Africa with voice and pen could give that time to prayer, you could bring Christ to Africa, stop tribal wars in Congo and Nigeria. Instead you are creating increasing bitterness by continually stressing only the evil of the whites and not the good they do...

Let us dedicate ourselves to the revival without which in a very few years Communism will take the world and you and I will be locked up or shot.

With every good wish, sincerely

Allister Smith.

Bishop Dodge's response on communism and revival was simple. He believed that Africans were turning to communism because America and most Europeans had failed to address the issues that made them second citizens in their own countries. At no point had Bishop Dodge embraced communism but he warned the State Department of his own country about its failure to support the Africans in their quest for independence was leaving the African nationalists with no option but to turn to Russia and China for support. In his response to Mr. Smith, Bishop Dodge writes, "As for Communism, most authorities agree that the greatest danger arises from the current suppressive policies of minority governments in Southern Africa."⁶⁷ He signed off his letter to Major Allister Smith by saying, "I dedicate myself to revival but, as I do so, I am confident that no spiritual movement will occur unless it is based on truth."⁶⁸

While he was visiting in the United States Bishop Dodge had an opportunity to teach at a university. For the whole of the spring semester of 1968, Bishop Dodge was

hired as a visiting professor of African Studies at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas. It was here that he was joined by Mrs. Dodge and from Baldwin, Kansas they went to Dallas, Texas to attend the 1968 General Conference meeting where they experienced the union of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church. Since the Evangelical United Brethren Church did not exist in countries covered by the Africa Central Conference, there were no adjustments to be made in Africa Central Conference.

Bishop Dodge's work in retirement

In June, 1968, Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge returned to Zambia to prepare for the Africa Central Conference. By the time Africa Conference met in Gaborone in Botswana from August 23-31, Bishop Dodge had made his decision that he would retire from his episcopal duties but according to the legislation of the Africa Central Conference, after a bishop had served for twelve years, if he was again re-elected it was for life. It meant that if Bishop Dodge was to be bishop for life he had to be re-elected. The big question in the minds of many delegates was, who will succeed Bishop Dodge? For many people precedence had been set in the Africa Central Conference that administrative assistants to the bishop were most likely to be elected. Bishops Zunguze, Shungu and Andreasson had all been administrative assistants prior to being elected as bishops. Rev. Jonah Kawadza, Bishop Dodge's administrative assistant who had chaired annual conference meetings in the absence of the bishop and a delegate to the 1968 General Conference seemed to be the right person to take over from Bishop Dodge.

Bishop Dodge was re-elected on the first ballot, to become the only United Methodist bishop in Africa today who was elected three consecutive times on the first ballot. Soon after his re-election he officially announced his retirement. He writes, “Knowing the impossibility of serving effectively any longer, I announced my retirement. The conference had honored me by reelecting me: I had honored them by retiring, when I knew that I could not serve effectively in exile.”⁶⁹

What followed was the election for the bishop to replace Bishop Dodge. The contest was between Rev. Jonah Kawadza and Rev. Abel Muzorewa. On the first ballot they tied and Muzorewa was subsequently elected on the sixth ballot. The fact that they had tied on the first ballot was shocking for many people. The question has often been asked, What role did Bishop Dodge play in the election of Bishop Muzorewa? While there is no direct evidence to suggest that Bishop Dodge directly influenced delegates to vote for Muzorewa, there is substantial evidence that during Bishop Dodge’s exile years, his relationship with his administrative assistant had not stayed positive. It is evident from some of Mrs. Dodge’s correspondence that the Dodges had long lost confidence in Kawadza. Mrs. Dodge writes, “African complaints about Jonah centered more on his favoritism and his lack of democratic procedures. Jonah always had a “chief” feeling about many things. He scolded us when we sold the Chev station wagon and bought a little Opel Rekord 2-door. It wasn’t befitting a bishop!”⁷⁰ It is also true that Bishop Dodge and Muzorewa had developed a very strong friendship. Bishop Dodge says about his relationship with Muzorewa, “Official business or not, friendship took first place.”⁷¹

At the consecration service for Bishop Muzorewa, Bishop Dodge was asked to give a charge to the new bishop. He concluded his charge with his theme of a new church in a new Africa. He says to Bishop Muzorewa,

First, maintain your personal integrity; honesty in dealing with other people, honesty in dealing with yourself... Second, maintain your concern for people; do not forget those of different classes, those who walk far from where you normally walk. Don't forget the despised... Third, maintain an open mind; learn from others as well as teaching them; listen as well as speak, admit your mistakes... Fourth, maintain vision and foresight. You must lead people and look ahead of them... Finally, maintain contact with the true vine, your ministry will fail if you are out of harmony with God's plan and purpose for you and for his church; keep sensitive, deeply sensitive to the whisper of God's voice...as you are taught you will go forth in faith to help to establish God's Church – a new Church in a new Africa.⁷²

After the Africa Central Conference in Gaborone, Botswana, retired Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge returned to Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation in Kitwe, Zambia. He was retired from the episcopal duties at the age of sixty-one but he would not get his pension moneys until he was sixty-five. The Africa Central Conference had only presented them with a silver tea service set. The tea tray was engraved "Presented to Bishop and Mrs. R.E. Dodge for faithful leadership and service to the Methodist Church, Rhodesia Annual Conference 1956-1968."⁷³

Arriving back to Mindolo the Dodges had the task to figure out what to do with their lives now that they had retired from the episcopal responsibilities. After thirty two years of living in Africa except for a few years they lived in New Jersey, one would have expected that the Dodges would pack their belongings and go back to the United States

but they decided to stay in Africa: returning to the role in which they began their ministry in 1936 – that of missionaries. Not even a job offer to teach at Baker University in Kansas would entice them back to the life in the United States. Mrs. Dodge's letter to her daughter Lois says it all, "Most people can't imagine why Ralph turned down \$10,000 - \$12,000 a year at Baker to stay here on missionary salary. If money were what we lived for, we certainly are foolish."⁷⁴

Instead, the Dodges resumed their status as missionaries of the World Division of the United Methodist Church Board of Missions. The Dodges officially became missionaries again on September 1, 1968 and they were assigned to the Mindolo Ecumenical Institute in Kitwe, Zambia where he became the chaplain and Mrs. Dodge was assigned as the field treasurer for the World Division in Zambia.



Bishop Ralph Dodge and Mrs. Eunice Dodge at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation, Kitwe Zambia 1970. Picture sent to the author by Ed. Dogde.

After twelve years occupying the highest office of authority and service in the United Methodist Church, Bishop Dodge became a chaplain for a small ecumenical school in Kitwe to help students and staff. It was rare transition but nevertheless a fulfilling transition for the Dodges. He served as chaplain at Mindolo until March 1971 and they decided it was time to go back to the United States and retire. Mrs. Dodge was permitted to enter Zimbabwe to pack her things for shipping to the United States. Zimbabweans who had benefitted under the education program and were back in Zimbabwe presented the Dodges with a gift of a copper map of Africa with the map of Zimbabwe clearly marked on it. The copper map was mounted on a twenty inch slab with

a befitting message inscribed: “Bishop and Mrs. R.E Dodge. In fighting for human justice in Zimbabwe and Africa you served Christ well.”

They Dodges flew out of Zambia into Johannesburg to catch a flight to Switzerland to visit Lois who was now living there. From Switzerland they flew into New York. They were officially home. Now they had to make a decision where to live in their retirement. Having lived in Africa for many years, they both wanted to live in a place with “a mild climate, a community with cultural opportunities and good medical services.”⁷⁵ Mrs. Dodge wanted a home that would accommodate her grandchildren and he wanted a place where he could garden. They chose Springfield, Missouri. Here they bought a farm and as Mrs. Dodge worked to improve their home, he started to work on making garden and pastures. He raised chicken, rabbits, sheep, cattle, ducks, pigs and even bees. Soon he became one of the main contributors to the Farmer’s Market which he helped to organize. Once again, he was doing something he had always loved to do, to farm. For Mrs. Dodge the morning routine of washing milking utensils was not her idea of retirement. As the daughter of a banker, she had never done such things growing up in Little Valley, NY.

While in Springfield, Missouri, Dodge served as associate pastor for visitations at the local church they worshipped. He was responsible for visiting new members, hospital and sometimes home visits. Then in 1974, the Council of Bishops asked him to head the Bishops’ Call for Peace and Self-Development of People. This was a befitting church wide program for him to lead as he had spent most of his career as a missionary and a bishop developing people in Africa.



In Springfield, 1972: Bishop Dodge and his siblings, Sophia and Orville
Picture courtesy of the Dodge family

His new assignment gave him an opportunity travel to India. While in Bombay they had a meeting where on the program it included a song by an African student. The student sang a song in Portuguese. After the meeting Dodge called the student and asked where he was from and the student told him that he was Angolan. He asked his name and the student told him that his name was Domingos Dodge. This took him by surprise that there was an Angolan with Dodge as a surname. Upon further inquiry Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge could not afford to hold their tears back when the student told them his story, “My father worked for a family by the name of Dodge in Luanda. Then my father returned to the village and married, and people called him Dodge because of the stories

he told people about his employer. When I was born, I was named Domingos Dodge.”⁷⁶
Dodge says, “My eyes were filled tears at the marvels of God’s grace.”⁷⁷

When the Dodges first went to Angola they hired two helpers, Maria Julia and Antonio the one who one day came to work limping after he stepped on a nail. The Dodge never knew Antonio’s surname. It turned out that Domingos was Antonio, their helper’s son. Dodge learned that Antonio was killed in 1961 when the uprising started and his wife and son, Domingos fled to Congo as refugees. Now Domingos was in Bombay studying for a bachelor’s degree.

Bishop Dodge’s return to Africa

In 1976 the Council of Bishops assigned Bishop Dodge to represent the general church at the Africa Central Conference which was held at Mindolo Ecumenical Institute. This was his first time to visit Africa after they had retired from Mindolo. Things had changed. Both Angola and Mozambique were now independent. In 1972, the Africa Central Conference had elected Bishop Emilio de Carvalho to replace Bishop Harry Andreassen. Bishop de Carvalho had benefited through Dodge’s higher education program. Bishop Zunguze of Mozambique retired in 1976 and a new bishop for Mozambique, Bishop Almeida Penicela was elected again a beneficiary of Dodge’s higher education program. Bishop Shungu of Congo had retired in 1972 and Bishop Fama Onema was elected to replace him. In 1976, Zaire now needed another bishop and Bishop Ngoy Kimba Wakadilo was elected. At that time there were five resident bishops

in the Africa Central Conference and Bishop Muzorewa of Zimbabwe was the most senior.

After the Central Conference meeting at Mindolo, Bishop de Carvalho invited Dodge to visit Angola briefly. It was fifteen years since Dodge had last visited Angola. Now it was independent Angola after a very brutal and protracted war of liberation. Upon learning that Bishop Dodge was in Angola, the president Agostinho Neto arranged a state sponsored dinner for Bishop Dodge as the guest of honor. Here was a President of a nation, a man Bishop Dodge had known as a little boy living with his parents next door and with whom he had a long bus ride from New York to Washington DC. This was what Dodge had planned his higher education program around. In Mozambique, Dr. Eduardo Mondlane was the President, another Methodist who with Bishop Dodge in Nashville was asked to leave a place of worship. However, in Angola at the state sponsored dinner, it seems like Bishop Dodge was touched more to see the president's mother, Mrs. Maria da Silva Neto. As district superintendent in Luanda, Dodge had moved Mrs. Neto and her husband from the big church in Luanda to go to the Dembos to plant a church on a twenty dollar salary a month. After the brief visit to Angola, Bishop Dodge returned to Springfield, Missouri where he resumed his duties as an associate pastor for visitations.

Again in September, 1979 the Council of Bishops called Bishop Dodge from retirement and assigned him to Zimbabwe. The political situation in Zimbabwe had significantly changed although a war for independence was raging on. An internal settlement of 1979 had seen Bishop Muzorewa become the first black Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. While Muzorewa was Prime Minister the Council of Bishops assigned Bishop Dodge to Zimbabwe. With Muzorewa as Prime Minister, Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge

were allowed to enter Zimbabwe again fifteen years after he was expelled from Zimbabwe. However, Muzorewa's did not last much longer because the general elections were called in Zimbabwe February 1980. Bishop Dodge who had called for majority rule witnessed Zimbabwean going to the polls on 14 February in 1980 and experienced with many Zimbabweans an independent Zimbabwe when it was declared on 18 April 1980 with the lowering of the Union Jack, the British Flag by Prince Charles and hoisting of the Zimbabwean Flag by Robert Gabriel Mugabe.

After Bishop Muzorewa transferred power to Mr. Robert Mugabe, Bishop Muzorewa resumed his episcopal duties. The Council of Bishop asked the Dodges to remain in Africa to represent the general church at the Africa Central Conference. Of the one hundred and fifty-four delegates who attended the 1980 Central Conference, only two delegates were white American missionaries based in Zaire. The United Methodist Church had truly become African, a new church in a new Africa. When the Dodges had first arrived in 1936 it was a missionary church and now as Bishop Dodge said good bye for the last time, it was an African church. He says, "I was convinced that, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the church was in good hands."⁷⁸

Eunice Dodge's death

When they returned from Africa in August 1980, Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge moved to a retirement village called Advent Christian Village in Suwannee, Florida. It was here in the summer of 1981 that they had an interview with an editor for the *Taylor University Magazine*. Of the many questions they were asked about their experiences in

Africa, two questions stand out. What was your most difficult experience? Bishop Dodge replies, “The most traumatic experience of our 35 years in Africa came July, 1964 when I was deported by the Ian Smith government. It was a shattering blow.”⁷⁹ The deportation had limited the Dodge’s work in such a way that they were cut off from the people they served. And they were asked the other important question, about their most rewarding experience. Bishop Dodge said, “Historians may evaluate differently, but one of the most creative things in which we participated was the opening of the Dembos regions in Angola to the Gospel seeing thousands coming to the Church through a meaningful encounter with Christ as Lord and Savior. Personal lifestyles changed as the Gospel made its impact and witnessing the change that occurs when an individual commits his or her life to Jesus Christ.”⁸⁰

A year after moving to the Advent Christian Village, on December 17, 1981 Eunice Dodge, died in her sleep. That night the two had shared a light meal and then played Scrabble before they retired for the evening. Early in the morning on December 18, Dodge went into his office to write as he normally would do. He expected to be called for breakfast at 7:30 in the morning. When she did not call him he went into her bedroom to wake her up. He knelt to kiss her and he felt her body was cold. He panicked. He activated the emergency alarm and the village doctor came. After checking on her, she pronounced her dead. Family and friends gathered at Live Oak United Methodist Church to celebrate her life. Dodge says about his wife’s memorial service, “I expressed both grief and gratitude: grief at my great loss but gratitude for the privilege of having had Eunice at my side for over forty-eight years. I was grateful that she had not had a period of prolonged pain.”⁸¹

In December, 1983 Dodge married Elizabeth Law, a widow and a deaconess in the local church. Together they had an opportunity to travel to Africa in 1984 where Dodge showed her the places he served as a missionary. Elizabeth died in 1998. Bishop Dodge would go on to live ten more years after Elizabeth died.



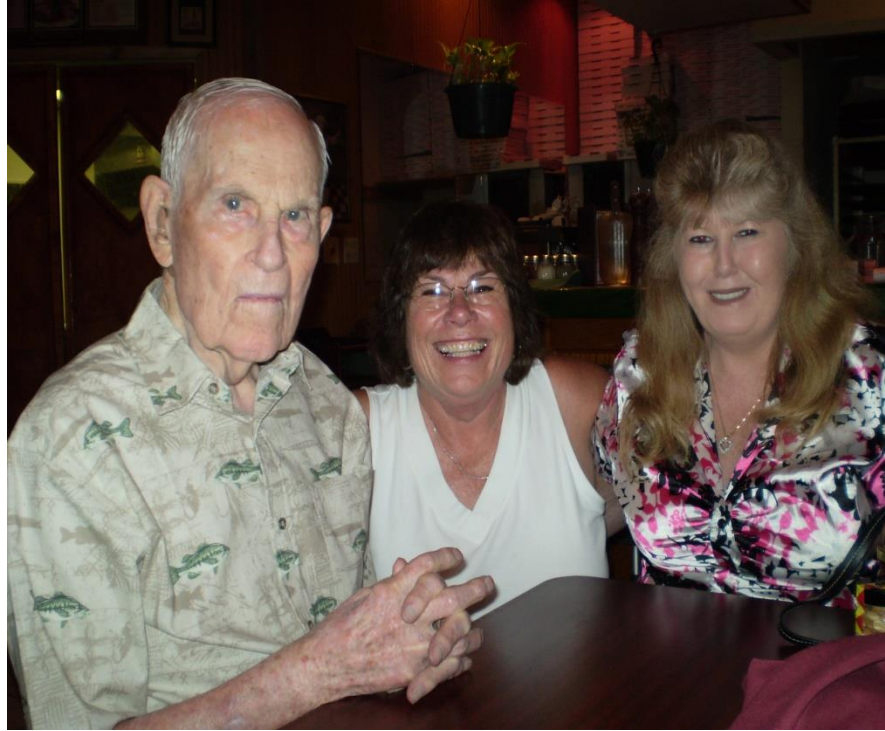
Bishop Ralph Dodge at his 100th birthday in Inverness, FL. From Left: Lois, Cliff, Peggy Ed and two other ladies (Ann & Gerry).

Bishop Dodge's illness and death

Unfortunately, Bishop Dodge had Alzheimer's disease the last few years of his life. In 2007 the family gathered to celebrate Bishop Dodge's 100th birthday. He was cared for in an assisted living facility in Inverness for two of those years. The family then found a lady caretaker who was willing to give him full time care in her home the last year of his life, so he was in a home-like setting. She was not a nurse, but she had cared for individual patients in her home for a number of years and knew how to take care of

their basic needs. She prepared all his meals and kept his bedroom clean and in good order. A practical nurse would visit to check on him and bathe him two or three times a week, and Ed would visit him daily whenever he was in town, usually spending an hour or so with him. He knew Ed was related to him, but he often called Ed by his brother's name (Orville) who had passed away several years earlier. One day when Ed took his dad for a short walk, Bishop Dodge asked Ed, "Orville, how do you stay so young?"⁸² He had to use a walker by then, and walked stooped a bit over the walker, so he clearly recognized that it was odd for his older brother (Orville) to seem younger, but he couldn't get the relationship straight in his mind. Some days, though, he called his son by his name and clearly recognized him as his son.

The last few weeks of his life, he was clearly getting weaker, and in the last few days, the family could tell the end would be coming soon. Other than the Alzheimer's and arthritis, there was no specific illness to treat, and at age 101, there was nothing to be gained by taking him to the hospital. Ed, a medical doctor notified his siblings that the end for their father was near. Lois and her daughters who lived in Jacksonville drove to Inverness. On August 8, 2008, Bishop Dodge quietly breathed his last breath in his bedroom surrounded by Ed, Lois and some of his grandchildren. So, Bishop Dodge died at the age of 101 in the presence of his loving family.



Picture of Bishop Dodge in May 2008 with Peggy (middle) and his caregiver

At the time of his death Bishop Dodge was survived by his four children: Ralph Edward Dodge, Jr. Lois Dodge Stewart, Clifford Dodge and Peggy Dodge Miller, eight grandchildren and eighteen great-grandchildren. His memorial service was held at the United Methodist Church in Inverness on August 16, 2008. Several speakers paid tribute to Bishop Dodge and his life, including representatives from Zimbabwe.

Bishop Dodge and Mrs. Dodge had donated their bodies for medical research at the Medical School of the University of Florida at Gainesville exemplifying their lifelong attitudes of being of service to others, even after death. So, the family had to wait until 2011 when Bishop Dodge's ashes were returned to them. On July 4, 2011 the family buried some of his ashes at Dowling Park in Florida and some were scattered at Old Mutare Methodist center in Zimbabwe.

“My cup overflows” – Bishop Dodge

Bishop Ralph Edward Dodge was a man who strongly believed that the answers to life's issues are found through faith in the message and teachings of Jesus Christ. He was a simple man. He grew up planning to be a farmer, and he was very straightforward in the way he dealt with everything, just as a farmer would be in managing a farm. He believed in honesty and integrity. Believing in the worth of all people, he respected everyone, and he strongly believed in delegating responsibility to others to do their part. He believed in fair play and in leveling the playing field so nobody was handicapped, but he believed everyone should do their best for the team. It was the combination of all these qualities that made him such a strong leader. He was not bombastic, but he led by the strength of his character, based on his faith that the message of Christ was for everyone.

When Bishop Dodge was asked in 1981 how he would describe his life as a missionary, his answer was simple. He said, “My cup has been full to overflowing.”⁸³ A man who had only planned to become a farmer had his life completely changed when in 1925 at a local Methodist Church revival he received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and would later answer the call to ministry to become a preacher and a missionary. He gave up his American dream to be a farmer and followed God’s vision for his life to Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and finally Zambia. Inspired by a mission’s goal that to be effective, the missionary should train indigenous people to do the work he had been assigned, Dodge focused on establishing a new church in a new Africa which was truly indigenous in its leadership and self-supporting for its own growth.

Notes

- ¹ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Jonah Kawadza, April 22, 1965.
- ² Ezekiel Makunike, Letter to Ralph Dodge, August 10, 1967.
- ³ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Mushangazhike and Emouga, January, 22, 1965.
- ⁴ Claude Pickens, Letter to Bishop Ralph Dodge, July 28, 1965.
- ⁵ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Rev. Claude Pickens, August 12, 1965.
- ⁶ "District Superintendents' Report," in the *Official Journal of the Rhodesia Annual Conference* (3-9 May, 1965), 42-43.
- ⁷ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Dr. Eugene L. Stockwell, July 17, 1965.
- ⁸ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Ann Porter Brown, November 1, 1965.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Margaret Deyo, Letter to Ralph Dodge, November 24, 1965.
- ¹¹ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Margaret Deyo, December ??, 1965.
- ¹² Richard J. Palmer, Letter to Ralph Dodge, October 20, 1965.
- ¹³ H.D Griffin, Letter to Marguerite Deyo, April 22, 1966.
- ¹⁴ Ralph Dodge, Telegraph to Margaret Deyo, November 12, 1965.
- ¹⁵ Margaret Deyo, Letter to Ralph Dodge, November 17, 1965.
- ¹⁶ Thomas L. Curtis, Letter to Ralph Dodge, January 4, 1966.
- ¹⁷ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, February 6, 1966.
- ¹⁸ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Friends, February 6, 1966.
- ¹⁹ Orville Mckay, Letter to Ralph Dodge, May 16, 1966.
- ²⁰ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Orville Mckay, June 1, 1966.
- ²¹ Thomas L. Curtis, Letter to Dr. Eugene Smith, July 30, 1964.
- ²² Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 164.
- ²³ Ibid, 165.
- ²⁴ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Ralph Dodge, May 2, 1967.
- ²⁵ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Ralph Dodge, May 4, 1967.
- ²⁶ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Mr. Davis, May 10, 1967.
- ²⁷ Mrs. Bengt, Letter to Eunice Dodge, April 17, 1967.
- ²⁸ Ralph Dodge, Letter Eunice Dodge, June 21, 1967.
- ²⁹ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Eunice, May 17, 1967.
- ³⁰ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Eunice, June 26, 1967.
- ³¹ Ralph Dodge, Letter Eunice, July 12, 1967.
- ³² Ralph Dodge, Letter to Colleagues in and from Rhodesia, October 16, 1967.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Eunice, June 27, 1967.
- ³⁵ Ralph Dodge, Letter to (a young man), July 3, 1967.
- ³⁶ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Zachariah Gwanzura, August 1, 1967.
- ³⁷ Ralph Dodge, Letter to a Missionary, August 3, 1967.
- ³⁸ Michael Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona: Survival Values of an African Culture*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1999), 168.
- ³⁹ Dodge, *The Pagan Church*, 17.
- ⁴⁰ First United Methodist Church of Evanston, IL had its newsletter *Surrounding* scribbled with these words by some people in the congregation and after church they handed him the copies they had scribbled.
- ⁴¹ Dodge, *The Pagan Church*, 29.
- ⁴² Ibid., 134-135.
- ⁴³ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Peggy Dodge, January 21, 1966.
- ⁴⁴ Edward Dodge, Letter to Ralph Dodge, December 10, 1967.
- ⁴⁵ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Ralph Dodge, August 15, 1967.
- ⁴⁶ Peggy Dodge, Letter to Ralph Dodge, September 23, 1967.
- ⁴⁷ Ralph Dodge, Family Letter, October 4, 1967.
- ⁴⁸ Edward Dodge, Letter to the Board of Missions, March 17, 1968.
- ⁴⁹ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Colleagues in and from Zimbabwe, October 16, 1967.

- ⁵⁰ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Ralph Dodge, May 18, 1967.
- ⁵¹ Ralph Dodge, Letter Colleagues, October 17, 1967.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Juel Nordby, Letter to Bishop Ralph Dodge, July 12, 1967.
- ⁵⁹ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Juel Nordby, July 20, 1967.
- ⁶⁰ Naboth Gandanzara, Letter to Bishop Dodge, July 3, 1967.
- ⁶¹ Major Allister Smith, Letter to Bishop Ralph Dodge, January 11, 1968.
- ⁶² Edward Dodge Jr., Personal Interview. May 14, 2014.
- ⁶³ Ralph Dodge, Letter Major Allister Smith, January 31, 1968.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Major Allister Smith, Letter to Bishop Ralph Dodge, January 11, 1968.
- ⁶⁶ Ralph Dodge, Letter to Major Allister Smith, January 31, 1968.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 169.
- ⁷⁰ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Lois and John Stewart, October 26, 1968
- ⁷¹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 189.
- ⁷² Muzorewa, *Rise Up and Walk*, 65.
- ⁷³ Ibid., 169.
- ⁷⁴ Eunice Dodge, Letter to Lois Stewart, December 30, 1968.
- ⁷⁵ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 182.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 185.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 195.
- ⁷⁹ Cleveland, "No More Encores," *Taylor University Magazine*, Summer 1981, 4.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid., 7.
- ⁸¹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 205.
- ⁸² Edward Dodge, email to author, March 3, 2017.
- ⁸³ Cleveland, "No More Encores," *Taylor University Magazine*, Summer 1981, 4.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

Bishop Dodge's ministry in Africa lasted 35 years. In those years, Bishop Dodge exercised leadership in the African church as a missionary, Foreign Division secretary of the Board of Missions, and bishop. In his era, he inevitably attracted both positive and negative reviews. For instance, in Angola, his colleague Rev. August Klebsattel, criticized him for unilaterally changing appointments in the middle of the year without consulting the bishop. As bishop, some missionaries working under him said he undermined their authority. They also criticized his open partiality towards Africans.

Dodge is not without critics even today. Tafataona Mahoso, a social commentator in Zimbabwe is prominent among them, especially concerning Dodge's education program, the Safari to Learning. There are those in the church who admire Bishop Dodge's leadership for the growth of the church but feel he became too political for their comfort. They liked him when he was simply their shepherd (*mufudzi wedu*) and not their politician.

Nevertheless, many, in and outside the church, hold Bishop Dodge in high regard for his contribution in the political discourse for the liberation of African states. They call him "the revolutionary bishop." There are also those in the United Methodist Church, particularly beneficiaries of those who went through Bishop Dodge's education program, who look upon him as a champion and fighter who promoted African well-being.

These different views about Bishop Dodge's contribution to the church in Southern Africa mark him as, at once, controversial and fascinating. In my interview with

Rev. Jijita, a retired pastor in Zimbabwe and who served under Bishop Dodge, I asked him about why people assess Dodge so contrastingly. Rev. Jijita brought up the story of the blind men who were asked to describe an elephant after each had touched a part of the elephant. Although Rev. Jijita claimed that the story was a Shona folktale, it is generally agreed that it originated in India. The point Rev. Jijita was making is that, given the social, economic, and political environment in which Bishop Dodge served in Southern Africa, people are bound to describe his contribution to the church from different angles depending on how they related to him.

There are two overarching missiological themes that bookend Bishop Dodge's contribution to the church in Southern Africa: embracing African nationalism as opportunity for the Church and joining Evangelical views with the Social Gospel to witness to Africans living in a fast changing environment whether culturally or politically. Within these two major missiological themes, there are other sub-themes.

African nationalism as opportunity for the church

Bishop Dodge wrote his book *The Unpopular Missionary* in 1964 to respond to a growing criticism of the missionary enterprise and the missionary church in the wake of African nations fighting to end colonialism. After World War II, the missionary church in Africa faced criticism from nationalists who questioned a perceived unholy alliance between Christian missions and colonial interests. Also, African nationalists some of whom were educated in mission schools were embracing communism and began to condemn the missionary church as promoting capitalism. The cry of "Missionary, go home!" was growing louder throughout the colonized Africa. Dodge observed, "The

Christian church is under fire in Africa... the present wave of antagonism has come as a surprise to many Christians. But the surprise often gives way to dismay and discouragement when the churches discover that severe criticism of the church in Africa today comes from within - it comes from second-generation Christians, and it comes with a force and bitterness that is convincing. All is not well on the mission field.”¹

Bishop Dodge was not alone in observing that all was not well for missionaries in Africa. James A. Scherer, who was the Dean of School of Missions at Chicago Lutheran Seminary had served as a missionary in Tokyo, was hearing the same cry in Asia and Africa, “Missionary, go home!” In 1964, Scherer published his book, *Missionary, Go Home!* and in it he observed,

Hostility to the gospel is nothing new, but the sudden collapse of western colonialism has given fresh impetus and vitality to the opposition. The friendly protective umbrella of western imperialism has now been withdrawn. As never before, the missionary enterprise and the younger churches are exposed to pressures and attacks by indigenous nationalists, religious extremists, communists, secularists, and others.²

Then there was John Carden of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) who in the early 1960s traveled to all places the CMS had missionaries to assess their work. In 1964, John Carden published a book, *The Ugly Missionary* in which he stated that by the end of World War II Africa had only four independent nations, but 1964 when he published his book there were 40 independent African nations. He also observed,

Religious Africa no longer equates civilization and progress with Christianity and the last five years alone has seen millions of Africans turning to other faiths and to other gods.... A fact most graphically and forcefully illustrated at the first Assembly of the All-Africa Church Conference held in Kampala in April 1963, when some of blacker blacks of the African nationalist revolution came to the fore, the pink of imperialism was well – if not always truly – condemned, and there was generally much confusion....”³

What happened at the first All-Africa Church Conference in Kampala, Uganda was that some invited African nationalists literally called missionaries attending the conference to go home for they were no longer needed. Carden observed that many missionaries attending the conference were shattered and feeling “despised and rejected.”⁴

In the face of hostility from rising African nationalism, there was an underlying and unanswered question of what role the church will play in Africa at a time when Dodge, Scherer and Carden all agreed that all was not well for the missionaries in Africa. Instead of feeling rejected and despised, Bishop Dodge did not see African nationalism as a threat to the church. Rather he embraced African nationalism and its criticism of both the church and the missionary as an opportunity not only for the missionary but for the church to be relevant even when there were some African nationalists who were demanding that missionaries go back to their home countries. There are two ways in which Dodge responded to the criticism of African nationalists and to the cry, missionary, go home!

a. Indigenize the church

The discussion on what indigenization means is still an ongoing one today given the connectedness of the United Methodist Church. However, Bishop Dodge began the process to indigenize the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe in two most clear ways. First, he allowed indigenous worship styles in the church. African drums, rattles (and other percussion instruments), dances and tunes which were once associated with ancestral worship were allowed in the church. Bishop Dodge first commissioned a study led by Dr. Marshall Murphree to look into why African Initiated Churches (AICs) two of which had broken away from the Methodist Church were growing. Dr. Murphree asked, “What factors have permitted the *Vapositioni*, in 30 years to grow twice as large as their parent Methodist has in 60 years without funds or foreign aid of any kind?”⁵

Murphree’s study concluded that the AIC’s had incorporated African music and elements in their worship which appealed to people. Also, the Ambassadors’ Quartet, the four men Bishop Dodge had sent to the United States to sing in churches to raise money for the higher education program had impressed the American churches with their music which had included only one African drum. Bishop Dodge had also admitted,

There is a problem in regard to the church’s treatment of African music. Most of the traditional music with its rhythm and drumbeat has been replaced by western music.... One reason the church is losing people is because it has failed to capture them emotionally through westernized forms of worship. Neither European hymns nor spirituals have real emotional meaning for Africans, for they come from neither personal experience nor their own culture.⁶

Second, Dodge began the process of turning over leadership of the church to Africans. In 1960 and 1962 he appointed two African District Superintendents. In 1963, he appointed Rev. Jonah Kawadza as his administrative assistant. By 1964, he only had one missionary as district superintendent. The participation of Africans in making decision for the church had completely changed the tone and direction of the church during the district and annual conferences. The most important change in terms of indigenizing the church through transfer of responsibilities happened in 1963 when the Board of Missions transferred all mission properties in Zimbabwe to the Rhodesian Annual Conference. When Bishop Dodge retired in 1968, the leadership of the United Methodist Church in Angola, Congo, Mozambique and Zimbabwe was in the hands of Africans. All the annual conferences had African bishops. Delegates at annual and central conference meetings were largely African.

Bishop Dodge is commended for the initial steps he took to indigenize the church. There is no doubt that the incorporation and the transfer of leadership to Africans was transformative for the United Methodist Church. However, Bishop Dodge fell short on content – an African Theology - which is at the root of indigenization because African Theology “attempts to understand the scriptures as they speak to the African context and to interpret essential Christian faith in authentic African language.”⁷

One of the major criticisms of Bishop’s higher education program is that it trained far too many lay people than clergy. That means Bishop Dodge did not provide an opportunity for his clergy to receive higher education necessary to reflect on African theologies. Rather, he allowed those were seeking ordination in the church (theologians) to receive limited education a little higher than high school.

b. Train (educate) future political/religious leaders

While African nationalists were fighting for the liberation of their countries, Bishop Dodge was aware of the fact that sometimes independence was coming to least prepared national leaders. He reminded the African nationalists that they still needed the church and the missionary to educate and develop leaders for the nations. He wrote,

With few exceptions, the leaders in the independence movements in the various countries of Africa have been educated, at least partially, in Christian missions. The church has provided the channel- in education – through which countless individuals have become conscious of their own place in society and now desire to raise the standards of their own people. It is true in Africa that many of those who subsequently took a leading part in the national struggle acquired their dominant ideas through their university education.⁸

Bishop Dodge was embracing African nationalism by reminding the nationalists that they still needed the church and the missionary at least for leadership development in the new nations. Bishop Dodge believed that the church had a role in educating and training religious and national leaders. One of Bishop Dodge's major contributions to the church and national politics in Africa was his higher education initiative, the Safari to Learning program. The Safari to learning produced both political and church leaders. Dodge's orientation at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut laid the foundation for the Safari to Learning program because during his orientation he was told,

To be effective, the missionary should quickly train indigenous people to do the work to which he or she had been assigned, and then move on to some other job. No missionary would be considered effective if he or she perpetuated himself or herself indefinitely in any given job, we were told. This was something new which emphasized the urgent development of local people.”⁹

The Safari to Learning program was successful in sending fifty students to overseas colleges and universities every year from 1960 to 1967. Tafataona Mahoso criticizes Bishop Dodge's higher education program as a "bourgeoisification or embourgeoisment of the African – a grooming of a pro-western African elite to take over church leadership as fast as possible and creating of middle class of United Methodist Africans with an eye to making them defenders of western interests and the western tradition in Zimbabwe."¹⁰

While it is true that the people who benefited from the higher education program returned to Zimbabwe with changed social status because of the better salaries they earned it would be a mischaracterization to suggest that Dodge was grooming defenders of western interests because many of the people who were educated through the Safari to Learning were strong opponents of colonial policies many of whom joined the liberation movements. There are plenty of examples: Dr. Antonio Agostinho Neto of Angola became the first President of Angola after leading a protracted war of liberation. Eduardo Mondlane became the first president of Mozambique. Bishop Abel Muzorewa became the first black Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. John Wesley Zvumunondiita Kurewa became Secretary of Parliament in independent Zimbabwe. Many others became ministers in independent Zimbabwe. Government departments and institutions in independent Zimbabwe were headed people who were educated through the Safari to Learning program.

Dodge was a social prophet of his time. At a time when African nationalism was rising, Bishop Dodge embraced it as an opportunity to make the church relevant through a higher education initiative. He reminded the African nationalists that a valid criticism

for the church was that the church had not done enough in the area of providing higher education. He too criticized the church in taking long to provide higher education. Dodge wrote,

The major blind spot of the total missionary program in Africa may be the failure of the European church leaders to foresee the approaching rebellion and to train nationals for administrative responsibility. There has been a failure to read the signs of the times. Some missionaries may be naïve enough to think that their African colleagues can carry responsibility without either training or experience; this may be kinder to believe than to think they deliberately kept Africans from higher education.¹¹

Bishop Dodge was among a few missionaries in Africa who listened to the criticism directed toward the church and missionaries and offered a reasonable response, insisting, “The church must forcefully reject any insinuation that it has not made any impact upon Africa and has not contributed to the well-being of its people. The church has made mistakes but there is no cause for undue shame. There is reason for every Christian to stand erect, head high, and proclaim in a clear voice the Good News of Salvation.”¹²

Joining Evangelical views with the Social Gospel

There second overarching missiological theme had to do with Bishop Dodge’s ability to join Evangelical views with the Social Gospel. Bishop Dodge believed in both the primacy of evangelism and social involvement. He believed there is a correlation between individual salvation and the salvation of a society. He embraced a holistic approach to ministry. His personal conversion which he often described as traumatic always reminded him to preach of personal salvation and he was quite clear that personal

did not entail a blind embrace of injustice and oppressive systems. In many of his messages he often quoted John 10:10. Bishop Dodge stated,

Jesus announced that He had come that His followers might have life and have it more abundantly. It is difficult to know who what compromises the abundant life for all- people differ from place to place and from time to time. Still the church encourages all to seek a full and abundant life on earth, as well as life eternal. This does not mean that the church puts more emphasis upon the physical than upon the spiritual; the church realizes man is body and mind as well as spirit. The church tries to maintain a balance of interest between the present and the future. Jesus said, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7); but He also said, “Give ye them to eat” (Luke 9:13).¹³

When Dodge started his missionary assignment in Angola, there is no doubt that evangelism as it related to inviting individuals and communities to a personal relationship with Jesus grew the church in Angola. The Dembo region which was hardly evangelized would later be called the Methodist country. People in villages turned in big numbers to hear him preach and his preaching was effective in that he lived in their communities, eating and hunting with him.

It was when the Portuguese labor laws began to frustrate his work at Mufuque that he came to a conclusion that unfair Portuguese labor laws and racial practices were a threat to evangelization and were making “the task of propagating Christianity in Africa become increasingly difficult, if not impossible.”¹⁴

On the one hand Dodge was leading a revival in the Dembos region seeing thousands of people coming to the Church through a meaningful encounter with Christ as Lord and Savior. And on the other hand he was in the corridors of the United Nations

building in New York and at the State Department in Washington DC raising awareness of the Portuguese and British colonial abuses in Africa.

Dodge's holistic position ultimately informed how he served as a missionary and a leader in the church. Because of holistic missionary practices, he formed relationships with Africans on the basis that all people are God's children and each person is valuable in the eyes of God. Central to Dodge's holistic missionary practices was his strong conviction that Christian morality is defined by how Christians practiced equality in their conduct. Dodge believed that true Christian love promoted a level ground for social equality. Hence his fight against labor laws in Angola and racial segregation in Zimbabwe.

Future of the church in Zimbabwe

In an extreme socio-political environment such as experienced in Zimbabwe from 1890 to 1978, which was marked by racial discrimination and segregation against Africans, the value of Dodge's life and ministry helps us to understand what a holistic or integral ministry of the Church might look like. Today, Zimbabwe faces almost the same socio-political challenges that Dodge faced. In his book *My Faith as an African*, Jean-Marc Ela writes, "The sole contribution of independence has been to replace classical colonial structures with oppressive structures and peasants discover that independence works only for barons of corrupt regimes, business people and administrative or political authorities."¹⁵

Before Bishop Dodge arrived in Zimbabwe in 1956, the racial injustices and cruelties of the Rhodesian government were barely challenged forcefully and openly by prominent church leaders. Bishop Dodge saw racial injustices as an affront to the Christian witness and offered a message of abundant life in which African salvation was not only about saving souls for heaven but also for his social environment.

The church in Zimbabwe can be informed by Dodge's concept of abundant life in which the religious life cannot be separated from the totality of human experience. Oppressive political structures and laws enacted to promote and protect corrupt political elites are an affront to Christian witness. The future of the church in Zimbabwe will thrive when church leaders can speak with moral clarity on fundamental issues that have marred abundant life in Zimbabwe. These issues include ending corruption, political, domestic and gender based violence and tribalism.

Notes

- ¹ Ralph Edward Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary*, 15.
- ² James a Scherer, *Missionary, Go Home!* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), 149.
- ³ John Carden, *The Ugly Missionary*, (London: The Highway Press, 1964), 34-35.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.
- ⁵ Marshall Murphree, "The growth of an African Independent Church." Unpublished Dodge collection papers.
- ⁶ Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary*, 52.
- ⁷ Harvey J. Sindima, *Drums of Redemption: An Introduction to African Christianity* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 162.
- ⁸ Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary*, 86-87.
- ⁹ Dodge, *The Revolutionary Bishop*, 25.
- ¹⁰ Tafataona Pasipaipa Mahoso, "Between Two Nationalism: A Study in Liberal Activism and Western Domination Zimbabwe 1920 to 1980" (PhD diss., Temple University, 1986), 216.
- ¹¹ Dodge, *Unpopular Missionary*, 22.
- ¹² Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary*, 154
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 96.
- ¹⁴ Ralph E. Dodge, "Missions and Anthropology: A program of Anthropological Research for Missionaries Working Among the Bantu Speaking Peoples of Central and Southern Africa" (PhD diss., Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1944), 162.
- ¹⁵ Jean-Marc Ela, *My Faith as an African*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 155.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of key interviewees

- Chikafu, Dr. Philemon – Africa University Chaplain and elder in the Zimbabwe East Annual Conference. Mutare, September 09, 2016.
- Dodge- Stewart, Mrs. Lois – Daughter of Bishop Ralph Dodge (email exchanges).
- Dodge, Dr. Ralph Ed. Jr. – Son of Bishop Ralph Dodge.
Africa University, Mutare, May 14, 2014. (Many emails were exchanged between Ed and the author).
- Dodge- Miller, Mrs. Margaret – Daughter of Bishop Ralph Dodge. (email exchanges).
- Horton, Dr. Bennet – Missionary Doctor to Zimbabwe and treated Bishop Dodge at Nyadiri in 1959. Lake Junaluska, NC, June 11, 2014.
- Humbane, Dr. William James – Bishop Dodge’s personal assistant for 10 years, Safari to Learning beneficiary Professor and missionary at Africa University.
Mutare, May 07, 2014.
- Humbane, Mrs. Maria – Dr. Humbane’s wife and a missionary at Ishe Anesu Project located at Hilltop United Methodist Church in Mutare. Mutare, May 07, 2014.
- Jijita, Rev. Elliot – Retired elder in the Zimbabwe West Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Mutoko, May 06, 2014.
- Kurewa, Rev. Dr. John W. Zvamunondiita – Safari to Learning beneficiary, Professor of Evangelism at Africa University and retired elder in the Zimbabwe East Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Mutare, May 19, 2014.
- Machuma, Mr. Shepherd – Archivist at Africa University and once a Conference Lay Leader of the Zimbabwe East Annual Conference. Mutare, May 20, 2014.
- Makawa, Dr. James – Safari to Learning beneficiary, retired Education Director in Zimbabwe, and once a lay leader at Inner City United Methodist Church in Harare. Harare, May 05, 2014.
- Masvaure, Mr. Wilson – Retired teacher in Zimbabwe and once taught at Nyadiri Mission and member at Hilltop United Methodist Church. Mutare, May 24, 2014.
- Papaya, Mr. Emmerson – Safari to Learning beneficiary, Education Officer in Zimbabwe and a member at Hilltop United Methodist Church in Mutare. Mutare, April 29, 2014. (Mr. Papaya died a few months after the interview).
- Shamu, Rev. Kenneth – Retired elder in the Zimbabwe West Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Harare, May 05, 2014.

Appendix 2: Dodge Family Letter to Author

To Whom It May Concern

I was contacted by Rev. Samuel Dzobo in 2012 about his proposed doctoral thesis on the impact of Bishop Ralph Dodge's life and work in Africa. He wrote to learn if I and/or my sisters could supply him with any papers or books relevant to our father's work, and to see if he could meet us sometime during the field research phase of his project.

This letter is to confirm that my sisters and I are very supportive of Rev. Dzobo's project. We're pleased that he plans to do an in-depth study of our father's life and work in Africa. It's my personal opinion that the timing of his project couldn't be better. Enough time has elapsed since my father's work in Africa to permit perspective on its impact, and there are still people alive in Africa and America who worked with our father who can provide their personal insights into his life and work. In another few years that will no longer be the case, so it's good that Rev. Dzobo's is undertaking this research now so he can take advantage of their contributions.

I'll conclude by saying that we wish Rev. Dzobo much success in carrying out his doctoral dissertation research.

Sincerely,

Edward Dodge, MD

Visiting Adjunct Professor

Non-Communicable Diseases

Africa University, Zimbabwe

Appendix 3: Assent Form

ASSENT FORM

A New Church in a New Africa: A Biographical Study of Bishop Ralph E. Dodge 1907-2008

Samuel Dzobo is a PhD candidate in the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY. Samuel's dissertation focuses on the life and ministry of Bishop Dodge in Africa.

You are invited to be in a research study being done by Samuel Dzobo. You are invited because you were a missionary and served with or under Bishop Ralph Dodge in Angola, Mozambique, Zambia or Zimbabwe.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in an interview in which you will be asked questions about your memories, stories and thoughts on your interaction with Bishop Dodge. Samuel Dzobo will come to your home, office or a convenient place of your choice to interview you. The interview will not exceed three hours per one session. If you have letters, documents and pictures of you and Bishop Dodge you are asked to share them with Samuel Dzobo.

There is no any form of payment in participating in this study.

The information gathered from you will be assessed with data to write a biography of Bishop Dodge. Biographies in their nature include names. As a missionary who served with or under Bishop Dodge your name may be included in the writing of the biography. In the event that you do not want your name included in the writing of the biography, you may choose a pseudo name.

Although you will not benefit directly from participating in this study, you will make a major contribution to the history of the Methodist Church in Africa and to the field of missiology.

You can ask Dr. Art McPhee questions any time about anything in this study. Dr. McPhee is Samuel Dzobo's research advisor.

Your signature on this form means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to participate in the study. You also understand that participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

Date Signed